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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Pete Collins is his show's greatest fan

WHEN Pete Collins was twelve he went backstage at the Gaiety Theatre, Leith, and persuaded a fire eater to teach him his art. The first time Pete tried he burned his lips. At the next attempt he achieved a good result without mishap . . . at which point his father, a theatre owner, entered the dressing-room.

"He told the fire eater what he thought of him for letting me play with fire," says Collins. But young Pete and his tutor stayed friends, and Pete went home with a fire eater's miniature torch hidden on him, so that he could demonstrate his new skill to his two admiring sisters.

Later he gave secret fire eating demonstrations in the cloak room at school. "And I never burned myself and never got found out again."

Collins, whose story begins on page 9, has spent his working life presenting amazing acts in theatres all over the world. His travels keep him out of Britain for nine months of the year.

At present he is making a number of films for cinema and television screening—using some of the 20,000 acts in his files. He is his show's greatest fan. "I'm still the wee boy with his mouth open, watching in amazement."

Collins was born in Glasgow forty-eight years ago and now lives in London with his wife Moya, a fashion expert and commentator, and three daughters. "There's nothing strange at home," he says, "except me. I went bald at twenty-five."

AFTER an outing with members of the Craven Pothole Club, JOHN BULL staff writer Rex Grizell was well equipped to write an article on potholing (page 22). His knees and knuckles were grazed from climbing and crawling through a warren of caves, and only a safety helmet had saved him from splitting his skull on the low roof.

The day had started at Clapham Village, Ingleborough, Yorkshire. There, Edgar Smith, one of the club's leaders, took a horrified look at Grizell's dark business suit and neat shoes and said, "You'll have to get out of those togs. Try this lot."

Grizell found himself holding an American army style helmet, climbing boots, and a bundle of trousers, shirt, pullover and overalls, all two sizes too large for him. Ten minutes later he was slogging up a Pennine mountainside in heavy drizzle.

Before the day was over Grizell had a good idea of what potholing is. In one cave he crawled a hundred yards bent double, and then had to wade through an underground pool, ten yards wide, waist-deep, and icy cold.

When, three hours later, he emerged from the caves, wet, sore, tired and hungry, he was convinced that potholing wasn't worth it.

A roast chicken dinner with country-brewed ale went some way towards making him change his mind—but not far enough.

Potholers maintain that their sport is "terribly healthy," says Grizell. "But not for me. I ended up with a stinker of a cold."

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Free Speech

- **Feather-bedding men in the office**
- **Five years adrift in the Arctic**
- **The snags of a seaside home**

MEN in offices don't realize how well off they are. They are in the same position as those lucky, middle-class housewives of Victorian times.

They have armies of servants rushing about attending to all the tedious details — secretaries, receptionists, office boys and commissionaires.

I could greet my husband with a smile, a glamorous dress and a four-course meal every evening if I were feather-bedded like that.—MRS. S. M., Guildford, Surrey.

Woomera Christening

Syd Kyle-Little says that Australian aborigines use a woomera, or throwing stick ("Land Of Singing Death," JOHN BULL, April 6). Is it coincidence that the Woomera rocket test site is so named, or is it because of the apt relationship with rockets? — W. LAWSON, Gateshead, Co. Durham.

"No coincidence," says Australia House.

Climbing Inquirers

The fourteen steps up to our front door seem to have an irresistible fascination for most people. Strangers asking the way invariably choose our house although our neighbours have only half the number of steps. I have even answered the door to a cripple

who had struggled up them to ask where somebody lived.—MRS. E. FLINTSTONE, Windmill Rise, Somercotes, Derby.

"People finding themselves in a strange situation and in search of information subconsciously seek out an authority," says a psychologist, "and authority is frequently associated in the mind with an imposing building or a height. A popular image might be the steps up to a throne."

In Deep Waters

Having been a victim of recent floods in North London, I was surprised to read that a tunnel has been built to carry water from the Thames to the River Lea ("Scientist In The Underworld," JOHN BULL, April 6). Talk about carrying coals to Newcastle! We are told that the Lea floods because it can't carry the water away fast enough.—E. L. CROSS, Leopold Road, Edmonton, London, N.18.

"Normally the Lea has insufficient water to fill the Lea Valley reservoirs which serve the east and north-east London areas," says the Metropolitan Water Board. "Flow through the new tunnel can be controlled."

Runaway Ship

Commander Duff's story of the ship abandoned in pack ice but found undamaged nearly a year later ("Strange Tales Of The Sea," JOHN BULL, April 6) reminds me of a ship that drifted round the Arctic crewless and intact for at least five years.

She was the 1,300-ton Hudson's Bay Company supply vessel Baychimo, which was trapped in pack ice in 1931. Her crew trekked to the mainland and were rescued by air, but the ship disappeared.

A few weeks later she was found again by Eskimoes, and the captain and crew set out with dog teams and retrieved all but a few bales of the million dollars' worth of furs aboard.

But they were unable to salvage the ship itself, and she was sighted many times in various places during the next five years.—A. V., Bristol.

Spectacle Frame-up?

George Beverley, in his attack on opticians ("Free Speech," April 6) seems to forget that they are not merely tradesmen selling spectacles over the counter. Unless carefully fitted, spectacles can nullify the effect of an eyesight examination.

Remuneration obtained by the optician over and above the cost price for frames, lenses or both is the fee that the public pays for his knowledge and skill, just as it pays a fee to any other member of a profession. And this principle is fully recognized by the National Health Service.

How Mr. Beverley can say that spectacle frames are "simple plastic products costing a shilling or two wholesale" is beyond my comprehension. The average price for the most popular N.H.S. plastic frame is around 10s. 6d. Contemporary types of non-N.H.S. frames, many of them

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THE COVER

Now then, play the game, you youngsters. . . . But *which* game? The cricketers claim that their pitch is being queered, and the footballers protest that it's the others who are offside. Cover artist Mays thinks that the calendar won't settle this argument, either. Potential cup finalists with Wembley still fresh in their minds don't bother to respect the seasons. But then, how is a fellow to get his eye in before facing the West Indies touring team? It looks as if it's up to the park keeper now. Though he doesn't relish the idea of becoming referee—or umpire.

hand-made and therefore costing considerably more, are splendid examples of the work of designers and craftsmen who are also entitled to payment for skill.

Mr. Beverley is also wrong when he says that there are too many opticians. At the moment there is a shortage, and the profession will be pleased to welcome him if he possesses the high educational standard necessary and is prepared to undergo the difficult and expensive four-year course of study needed to qualify.—G. H. GILES, Secretary, The Association of Optical Practitioners, Brook Street, London, W.1.

The average dispensing fee an optician gets from the National Health Service is £1 3s. He also gets back the wholesale cost of lenses he has supplied, plus a small extra sum to cover the risk of breakages. Patients each pay £1 plus the cost of the frames.

Relative Costs

Last autumn we were foolish enough to buy a home by the sea—a dream house with the sweep of the New

Forest behind and the Solent in front. Then came the snags.

It was only fair to invite our respective parents to spend a fortnight in the bracing air, but it was a pity that they weren't able to arrange the *same* fortnight. Then there was the aunt with the arthritis, poor old soul, who came for a week and hung on for five, to say nothing of the teenage cousin who arrived unexpectedly, complete with girl friend, and had to be thrown out at the end of a fortnight.

Counting the people from the office and others who "dropped in" we had only four clear weekends to ourselves during the whole summer—and we haven't dared to work out the entertainment costs and incidental expenses.

The main cost, of course, will be the £100 in legal fees involved in switching to a house with only two bedrooms instead of four.—MRS. G. G., Hampshire.

Votes For Women

Miss G. A., of Lancashire, says that women hospital patients are more finicky than men ("Free Speech," April 13). But with few exceptions I find that women are grand patients and are often unduly grateful for what we do.

Nurses would do well to remember that women suffer far more than men do from worry about those left at home.

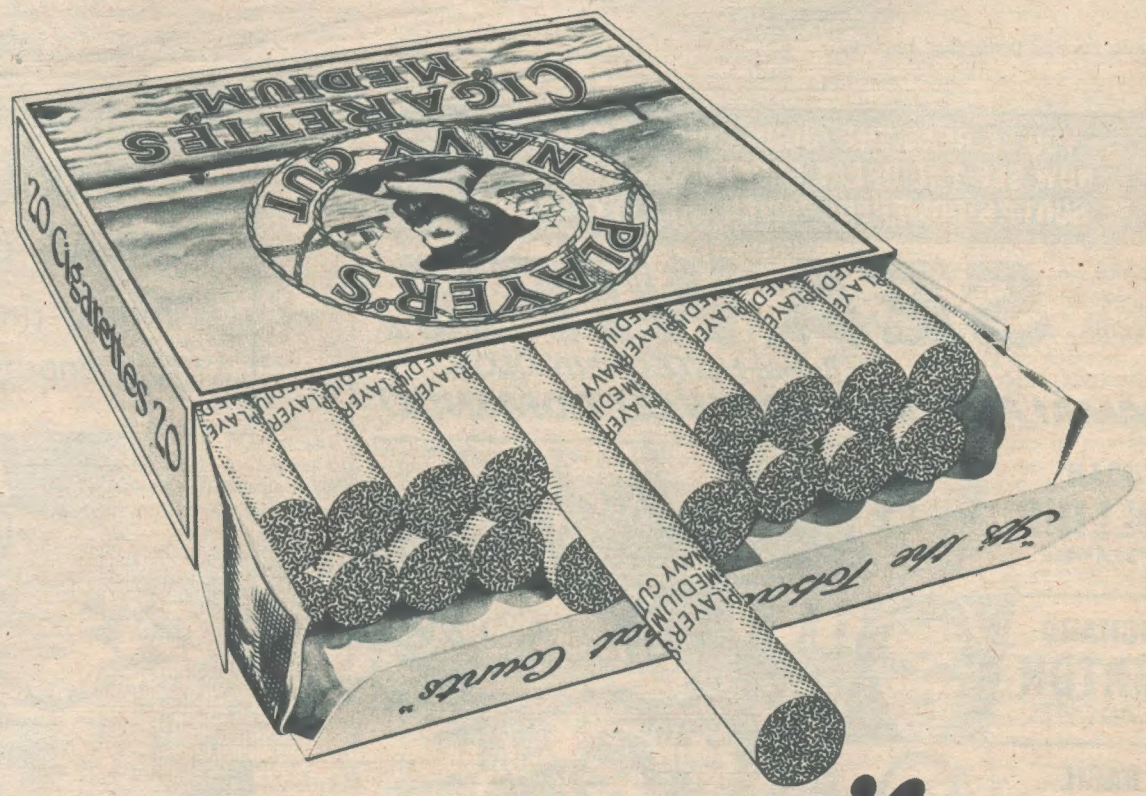
I wish women patients all the enjoyment they can get from being waited on by what Miss G. A. describes as "hired helps." After all, we nurses are just that, and some of us enjoy the privilege of making their stay in hospital as happy as we can.—MRS. M. E. HOLLOWAY, S.R.N., Alton, Hampshire.

. . . The obvious reason why men don't complain in hospital is that they are cowards. They wait until they get home and then complain about hospital food, especially the tea, the early rising *and* the hard-working nurses. Oh, how they've suffered, these men!—MRS. M. SMITH, Franklin Street, Oldham, Lancashire.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

PLAYER'S MEANS PLEASURE

—and everyone knows it



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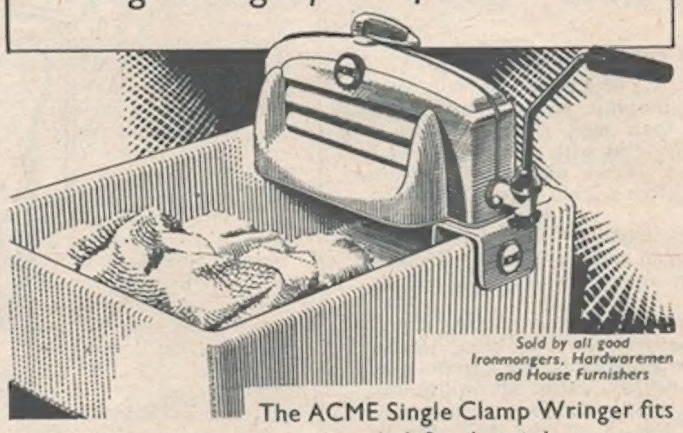

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It was a terrifying prospect . . . a trigger-happy millionaire turning the lion into a

MAN EATER

by JOHN BENJAMIN GEORGE

ILLUSTRATED BY WYLES

Virginia was watching the arrival of the safari client. "Oh, what a nice new car!" she said to Jan. "He must be rich"

A RIFLE shot, distant but unmistakable, cracked on the far side of Pretorius Farm. Jan Pretorius, flat beneath the disabled pick-up, dropped his wrench and cupped his hand behind an ear. There was a long pause, then another shot, followed quickly by a third. It was a short-barrelled magnum, not a heavy double.

He held still for another five minutes, ears cocked towards the zebra pasture higher on the slope of Mount Kilimanjaro, expecting to hear a fourth report. Then he picked up the wrench, reading by the slant of the equatorial sunlight that it was 9.30 in the morning.

This would be the end of two lions, shot by the millionaire client of a Nairobi white hunter. The party had arrived yesterday with a note from the game warden asking Jan to let them shoot the two cattle-killing lions off licence, as vermin. With usual East African hospitality his mother put them up in the guest *rondavel,* and two hours before dawn Jan got up to direct them to the zebra pasture, where he had heard the lions kill at midnight.

He watched them set off in their brand new safari car. The hunter was Jim Wyett, senior partner of a

long-established Nairobi safari firm, a big greying man with a jocular manner and a game knee. His reputation was international, and his clients were usually royalty or film stars. This one was a middle-aged British business man, bespectacled, small and a little soft-looking.

The reputation of Wyett and the familiar way the client fondled his rifle kept Jan from warning them to shoot carefully and to put in an extra shot to make sure each lion was dead. The damage a wounded, angry lion could do was known on all the farms.

As Jan lay under the truck and struggled with the corroded bolt heads, he mused unhappily on events of the past three years.

His father had died of blackwater fever, and after that Jan and his mother had the grinding responsibility of the farm. They had had three years of misplaced and mistimed downpours, of drifting sterile clouds, of parched seedlings and wasting herds. They were back now where the locusts had put them in '49, and the bank owned two-thirds of their place.

The old safari life with his father, the walks through Buffalo Crater and the long annual treks for prize ivory were a dull memory. The Purdey .470 double and the Mauser .256 were almost in retirement, and the twelve safari porters had been converted to farm work.

And that wasn't all. Other things had changed, too—like that Hines girl. She had no right to change from an awkward, knobbly-legged heifer into such a smooth-curved, rhythmic-motioned girl. It was torture to be near her.

He remembered the last glimpse of her the day before yesterday, and swallowed. The wrench lost its grip and his knuckles struck the blurred end plate.

"Damn this crate!" he said, re-fixing the wrench. "Damn the banks!"

"Why all the profanity?"

The voice, tomboyish, came with the slowing hoofbeats of Virginia Hines's mare. Jan went on wrenching the nut, pretending not to hear. The hoofs were stirring the red dust a few feet away.

The girl dismounted, and something turned Jan's head towards the pair of jodhpur cuffs. The ankles were trim, the whipcord and leather snug around calves that swelled gently.

Virginia dropped to her knees and tilted her oval face below the running board, looking straight into his eyes.

"Jan, get up. A safari car is coming up the road."

He went on turning the wrench. "Never mind. It's Wyett and a client. They came here yesterday to shoot those two cattle killers. Fired the shots half an hour ago. Only three. They must have seen both lions. Seems they don't bother with safety shots. You'd think Wyett would know better. He knows the trouble we've had with half-killed cats."

Virginia rose. Jan cast the wrench and gripped the running board with his fingers, moving from under the pick-up in a single, long pull. He was unaware of his high-cheekboned, straight-nosed handsomeness. Later, with his eyes nine inches above Virginia's, he was unaware of the slight tremble in the corner of her mouth. He felt like a wart-hog before a leopard, and knew that there was grease on his shirt front and that he wanted to reach out and tug her against it.

They both turned to watch the car.

"It was the client's rifle," Jan said. "Maybe he's one of those one-shot, one-lion types."

"Oh, what a nice new car! He must be rich."

They walked to the safari car as it parked just inside the gate-posts. Jim Wyett got out stiffly, limping. He looked ill. "Miss Hines," he said, "this is Mr. Arthur Barton . . . Arthur, shake hands with the prettiest girl in East Africa."

Jan, curious, walked around to the tail gate. A big, short-maned lion lay on the car floor. He came back quickly to the front of the car.

"Nice lion, Mr. Barton," he said. Then he faced Wyett. "Where's the other?"

"What other? This one was alone."

"Why the three shots?" asked Jan. It was an impolite question and he knew it.

Wyett looked tired. He said: "The first was a miss. Over an eyebrow, probably. He moved and stood for another shot. Then Arthur flattened him and put in one more shot for safety. Arthur did all the shooting; he's good."

Jan would have stopped then, but Barton, who had listened quietly, now spoke. "I'm ashamed of that shot. I held for his head at thirty yards, and then I nailed him easily farther away. I don't know what went wrong."

Jan suddenly felt suspicious. He knew this lion never hunted alone. He spoke to them both. "Are you sure there weren't two?"

Wyett was no longer smiling as he answered: "As sure as common sense allowed."

"You picked up the spoor by a dead zebra?"

"Yes."

"What did the ground look like?"

"All tracked up, but the pug marks were all the same size."

"How much was eaten from the carcass?"

"One bellyful, no more. The haunch and half a flank. Hyenas hadn't begun." The old hunter wiped his forehead, and his voice suddenly boomed: "Young man, if you're hinting I'd leave a wounded cat, you're getting too damn big for your boots." Then he calmed and said in a tired fatherly tone: "Jan, can't a man beg a cup of tea without filling out a damn questionnaire? I shot lions before you were born."

As Jan led them to the house he tried to think reasonably. The farm hands had seen this lion a hundred times, always with a lioness as big as a male. The tracks might look the same. And last night two cats had roared over the kill. It was the old story—a fancy safari and a damned, trigger-happy millionaire; and another wounded lion running loose on the farms. . . .

Wyett was pale. His lips quivered against the rim of his tea-cup and everyone recognized the routine complaint of malaria.

Jan's mother called for a thermometer and read it at a hundred and three degrees. Wyett was led to his bed in the guest *rondavel* and dosed with quinine.

When they came back to the tea table, they saw the herd boy, and Jan almost ran back to get Wyett, to show him this first product of his damned carelessness.

The herd boy stood near the kitchen doorway, next to the frightened cook. His right arm and shoulder had been raked by the claws of a lion. The wounds had clotted, but a lot of blood had been lost. His small blanket was caked solid. Jan grabbed the medical chest off the sideboard and shouted to the cook to prepare a bed out on the veranda. While his cuts were being tended the boy talked in laboured gasps.

An hour ago, higher up on the slopes, he had walked close to a lioness. She had risen from the knee-high grass and knocked him down. He lay still and she moved slowly away. She was near the herd, but she did not kill a bullock. The lioness was newly blind in one eye, with blood and a piece of bone showing.

Jan handed the bandages and drugs to his mother. He turned and told the second cook to gather kit for a week's safari.

"I'm going after the lioness," he said.

"When?" asked Barton.

"As soon as the kit is ready. Half an hour."

"May I come?"

Jan looked down at Barton. *My heaven,* he thought. "This is a foot trip," he said coldly. "A hard walk."

"If I hold you up, Wyett's boys can guide me back."

"All right. Get two of Wyett's crew to carry your things."

Jan went to the guncase, removed the .470 Purdey double, rodded the oil out of the barrels and tried the locks. Then he put on his flop-brimmed hat and walked out on to the rear compound, where six porters and the second cook were packing their loads.

Barton came out, carrying his .375. Two of Wyett's bearers followed with bedding and cartridge bag. The porters, glowing ebony in the heat, bustled. Soon the last one lifted his head load.

"Let's go," Jan said, and they moved off in the unmilitary ant file of the nineteenth-century safari.

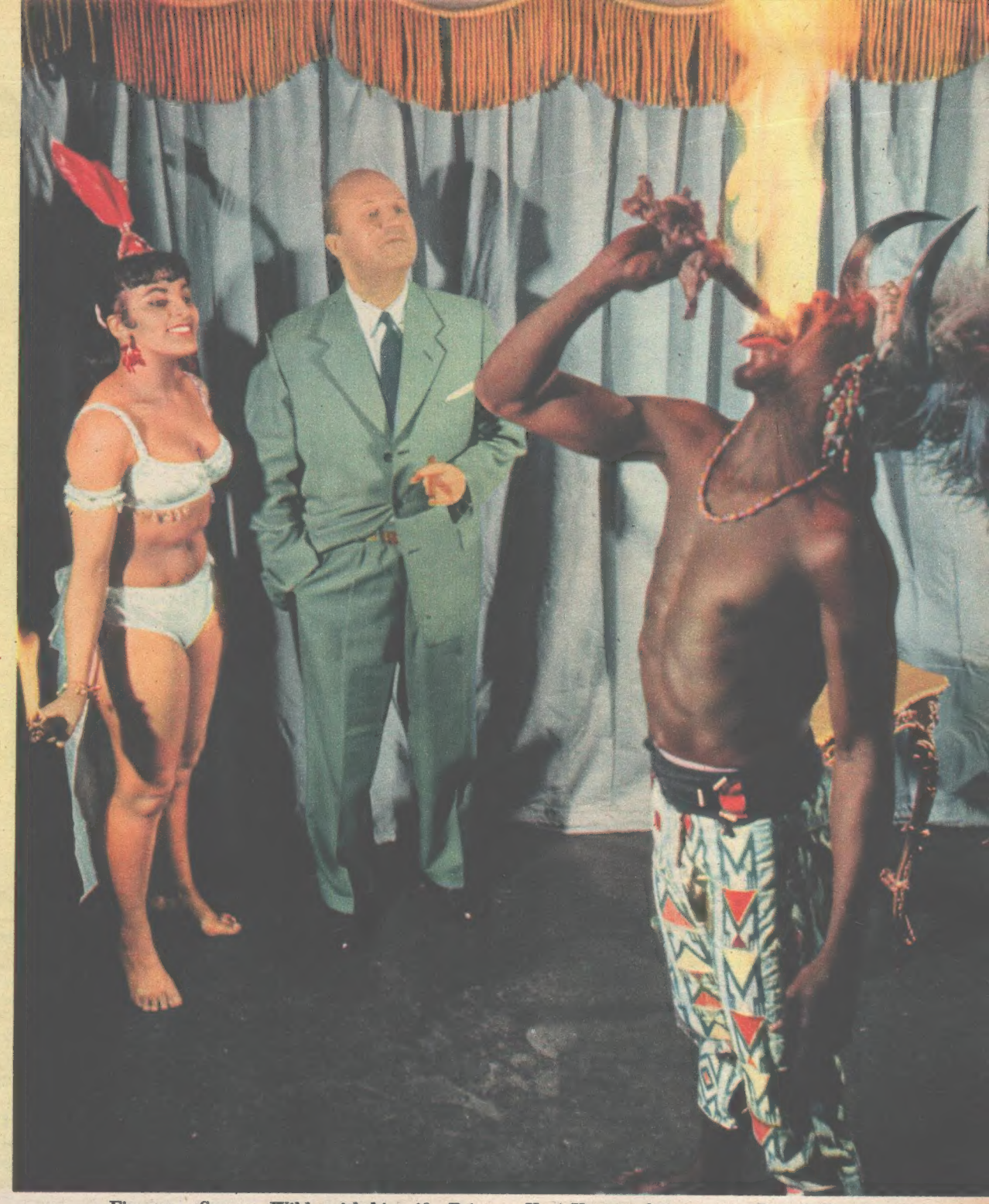
Jan was in front, with the double rifle, followed by his gun boy carrying a small head load. Barton and a gun bearer followed, with the remaining porters in charge of the kitchen boy

Continued on page 25

He heard a warning shout—too late. An outsize lioness leaped out and crashed into him

THE STRANGEST SHOW ON EARTH

Pete Collins tells the story of his amazing show. "It's fantastic!" he says. "Stupendous! Incredible—but true!"



Fire eater Sammy Wilde with his wife, Princess Kari-Kari, and impresario Pete Collins

WHEN called upon to define my job I usually fall back on the much-abused term "impresario," which somehow brings to my mind the picture of a fur-collared central European with dandruff in his hair. I have no dandruff in my hair. I have no hair.

Although it may sound a little melodramatic, the occupation I follow is really quite simple and easily explained. By profession I am a specialist in the unusual. My telegraphic address is "Incredible, London," and those two words have been my link with some of the strangest people the world has ever known.

My bizarre stage and television shows have appeared in countries as far apart as Belgium and Venezuela—yet, but for an odd quirk of fate, they might never have been seen at all.

It happened in Scotland, over twenty years ago. I was lying in a barber's chair, my mind a blank, my face wrapped in a hot towel, when I heard a quick jabber of excited French. The customer in the next chair was frantically arguing with the assistant dealing with him.

I offered my services as interpreter. No wonder the hairdresser had been bewildered: this strange person wished his hair to be trimmed so that it would look like a wig.

Well, there was no accounting for tastes, so I translated these instructions. The Frenchman was profuse in his thanks, and, with a flourish, gave me his card. It bore the words: "L'HOMME MÉCANIQUE" and his name and address. His present engagement was with a local fairground. I then received some interesting information regarding the life and habits of a human robot. He was paid to sit on a platform outside the Rocket Railway and perform jerky movements to attract the crowds.

The barber eagerly requested a demonstration. Without warning, the little man sat upright. His stare became unblinking and fixed. He shot his arms out into the unnatural posture of a tailor's dummy, and proceeded to go through his evolutions.

It was quite uncanny. Even though one knew that he was a human being, his artistry was so great that one could not quite credit the fact. We were suddenly looking at a clockwork doll. He rose stiffly and stalked about the shop, watched in hypnotized fashion by customers and barbers alike. Then all at once he relaxed, became human again, and sauntered back to his seat. The onlookers burst into spontaneous applause. And at that moment the Great Idea was born. . . .

I hurriedly paid the barber—who protested that I was only half shaved—grabbed my hat, and took a taxi to my Glasgow office. There, seizing a piece of paper, I jotted down the names of all the most unusual variety performers I could remember.

When I ran my eye down the list, I saw that the collection I had compiled was a really weird one. I immediately sent the memorandum through to my elder brother, at that time the senior partner in our family theatre business. I expected him to come rushing in the moment that he set eyes on it.

He didn't. In fact, it wasn't until we were leaving for home that I saw him and could bring up the subject. "A complete show of opening acts?" he said. "People would walk out in hundreds. No, Pete, you'll have to think again."

I was squashed. But I did not lose faith in the Idea. It might not, after all, be a world-beater, but it had distinct possibilities, and these I was determined to explore.

MY brother was due to visit New York the following week, leaving me in charge of the business. No sooner had he set foot on the gang-plank than I rushed cables all over the world to the acts I had selected. Then, anxiously, I awaited their replies.

One by one they came in, and the show I had imagined took shape. On paper, it certainly looked as if it would justify its description of "The Strangest Show on Earth."

The cast was headed—physically as well as

Collins with Senorita Montserrat Alberich, who "paints" pictures on an ancient typewriter. She uses eighty-three differently coloured ribbons for her "paint"

metaphorically—by Jan van Albert, a Dutch giant who was nicknamed "Lofty." He was over nine feet high. His partner—and brother-in-law—was a Swiss midget called Seppetoni. Seppetoni, drawn up to his fullest height, was exactly twenty-three inches tall.

Then came Professor Cheer, a Russian-born musician, who scorned the usual paraphernalia of manufactured instruments and relied solely upon his own cranium to produce the tunes with which he regaled his audiences. He was known as "the Man with the Xylophone Skull."

Lemo, the Tame Lioness, was another attraction. Lemo slept at the foot of her master's bed like a dog.

So that Lemo would not feel too lonely among the humans, I engaged Madame Fifi, the Educated Pig. The tricks of Fifi were remarkably varied. She could walk the rolling barrel, play see-saw, ring a bell for her food, draw round the stage a little cart driven by her trainer, and jump hurdles in the deft manner of a Fox-hunter. Her trainer kept her with him in his dressing-room, and she always behaved with dignity and reserve.

The next "artist" to cable acceptance was Radiana. Radiana wasn't really a person at all, but an ingeniously contrived electrical machine that looked like a big silver sphinx. But not only could Radiana perform skilful conjuring tricks, she could shave a member of the audience as well—using an ordinary cut-throat razor.

The famous armless artist, Elroy, was a much-valued addition to the cast. Attired in court dress, he painted lightning pictures in full colour—with his right foot.

And, of course, there was René Mazie, the Mechanical Man from the barber's shop.

The theatre I had selected for the opening was in Aberdeen. On the Sunday morning my strange cast started to assemble. I met the artists as they arrived off the trains.

The one performer about whom I entertained private doubts was the Man with the Xylophone Skull. I thought that he might be a fake. On the pretext, therefore, of offering him a drink, I invited him to my hotel sitting-room.

"Tell me the truth, old chap—I won't give you away," I said. "Can your head really be played, or is it a trick of some kind?"

He assured me with dignity that his act was perfectly genuine.

The room contained a grate in which the makings of a coal fire had been laid. From it I took two sticks of wood.

"What tune are you going to play?" he inquired.

I thought for a moment, then selected "Tiptoe Through The Tulips."

Keeping to the rhythm of the tune, I proceeded—gingerly at first, then more firmly, as the professor invited me to strike harder—to tap out on his head what was quite unmistakably "Tiptoe Through The Tulips." His skull even had a fine resonant tone.

Then he told me the secret of this strange "instrument" of his. A baby's head is divided into four quarters. Covered by skin, these do not join together until some months after birth. In the professor's case, this juncture had occurred imperfectly, and, by manipulating his skull, variations in tone could be produced. After he had gone I tried it on myself. It hurt. My head had certainly joined up all right.

There were no advance bookings. At half past five on the opening evening I established myself in the manager's room, which overlooked the front of the theatre. The performance was advertised to begin at six thirty, and we kept opening the little hinged circular window and peeping out to see if any customers had arrived. The street remained empty.

At six o'clock I shut the window firmly, accepted a stiff consolatory drink from the manager, and sat down, starting mentally to phrase abject cables to my senior partner.

The office was small and rather airless, and at six thirty the manager moved apologetically to the window and pushed it open. A roar like the shock wave of a bomb burst into the room. It came from the excited voices of many people. I rushed to the window and looked out. A queue, six deep, extended out of sight round the theatre.

I looked at the manager's face. He was grinning mischievously. He had omitted to inform me that his patrons left their shops and factories at six o'clock and could not possibly arrive at the theatre until at least a quarter past.

The show itself was received with gratifying incredulity and laughter.

Adolph Neiman, representative of an important chain of London and provincial variety theatres, was in the audience. At the end of the show he telephoned his director, urging him to come to Aberdeen right away. The man caught the overnight train.

He booked the show—which I had named *Would You Believe It!*—on sight. And so, after playing the Collins circuit of theatres, it set out on a long journey which was to prove world-wide. . . .

I'm often asked what is the most amazing act I have ever presented. There is, of course, no real answer to this question—nor could there be.

But there is one act upon the miraculous nature of which everyone seems to be agreed. It is that of Thea Alba, the Woman with Ten Brains.

She can, and does, write ten different things at the same time, with chalk clamped to the ends of long pointers attached to her finger-tips. With a piece of chalk held in each hand, she can write on a blackboard, simultaneously, in any two languages selected out of the twenty-four she knows.

Lying on a specially built reclining-board, she can write four different words simultaneously with her hands and her feet. She can play two different tunes, one with each hand, and sing a third. And she can draw two different pictures in colour, using both hands at once.

Thea Alba was born Thea Gassmann in Berlin. She wanted to become an actress and, after her formal education, she was enrolled in the Leopold Jessner School of Drama in 1920.

But Thea was destined never to become an actress in the accepted sense of the word. During the end-of-term holidays a few of the pupils were lazing in the school garden and challenging one another to various feats of skill.

One of these was to make contrary movements with the feet and hands. A particularly tricky test consisted in moving a foot anti-clockwise in a smooth circle and writing the figure "3" at the same time. Try it yourself.

Not one of the pupils could do that trick at all—except Thea. And she, with her dainty foot revolving continuously, wrote a whole row of perfect threes.

Henry de Vry, founder and president of the *International Artistik Loge*, was sitting nearby, watching the students' antics with amusement. He realized at once the significance of Thea's effortless achievement, and the outline of the act she now presents flashed into his mind.

"If you can do that," he said to her, "you can write the letter A with one hand and the letter R with the other."

"Can I?" said Thea. "Lend me another pencil, somebody, and I'll try."

She had never written with her left hand before. Lack of usage made the letter she formed rather clumsy, but it was an unmistakable A, and a few repetitions soon put her ability to write ambidextrously beyond doubt.

Gradually, over the years, with de Vry's enthusiastic guidance, she built up her act and won praise from heads of state on both sides of the Atlantic. She appeared both in *Would You Believe It!* and in my television programme, *You've Never Seen This!*

She lives happily with her husband, the famous German actor Oscar Albrecht, now retired from the stage, in Wiesbaden.

Senorita Montserrat Alberich, of Barcelona, is another woman with amazing talent. She "paints" pictures, using an ancient typewriter instead of brushes.

She has just held an exhibition of her works at the *Sala de Arte* in her native city, and in fourteen days received offers for the purchase of

all thirty-four paintings on exhibition. Nevertheless, she sold only the few that she could force herself to live without, turning away the other would-be art patrons with regretful words.

Judged by any standards, Montserrat's reproductions of the Old Masters are competent affairs.

Even if you peer into them closely it is impossible to discern how the pictures have been produced. No tell-tale typemarks mar their surface, the general effect being strongly reminiscent of "tight" pastel-drawing.

The discovery of her talent was purely accidental. She is the only daughter of a manufacturer of rosaries and religious medallions. But her father's business offered her no promise of a career, so she enrolled at a commercial college to study shorthand and typing.

At the end of the course there was a free day during which the pupils sat around waiting for their examination results. These were rather long in coming, so the teacher suggested that the pupils should occupy themselves by trying to make pictures on their machines—"just for the fun of it."

Some surprisingly good pictures resulted. But everyone agreed that little Montserrat's typing of a bunch of red roses was more than good—it was exquisite. Some time later the picture was shown at an exhibition in Barcelona. She started to practise seriously, and soon her art attracted the attention of a much wider public.

All Montserrat Alberich's paintings, from start to finish, are typed with three symbols only—the "m," the "n" and the full-stop. She has tried all the other keys on the board, but these are the ones that give the most satisfactory results.

The greatest tribute one can pay her is to state that she has even caught that elusive smile on the lips of the Mona Lisa.

Her collection of coloured typewriter ribbons is the largest in the world. She has eighty-three different shades to choose from.

All her pictures are typed on fine canvas. She used to use parchment, but it wrinkled and spoiled her work. She never uses a rubber except when she is typing letters for her boss: for Senorita Montserrat Alberich, world-renowned typewriter artist, film and television personality, works humbly as a stenographer in the Barcelona Central Police Station.

During the Spanish Civil War and the second World War, she was forced to overcome her reluctance to part with her pictures and barter some of them for parcels of food. Thus it is that examples of her work are now in many museums and art galleries throughout the world—notably in Germany, France, Holland, Switzerland, Uruguay and the United States. . . .

Although the barber-shop incident which sparked off the idea for *Would You Believe It!* is so clear in my mind, I cannot claim to remember the origins of my other novelty shows.

Indeed, I recall the feeling of dazed wonder I experienced when, surrounded by a yelling horde of near-naked savages at the dress rehearsals of *Jungle Fantasy*, I asked myself how on earth I had become mixed up in this sort of thing.

True, the yelling "savages" were mostly graduates from London University who had never been nearer to the African bush than Tottenham Court Road, but their "cannibal" chieftain, Prince Kari-Kari, was a genuine native prince.

His daughter, Princess Olive Kari-Kari, a shapely golden-brown beauty, married Sammy Wilde, a fire eater. A former middleweight boxing champion of British West Africa, Sammy turned to fire eating after he had defeated the existing champion, Billy Petrol. It seems that his opponent's name put ideas into his head, for Sammy now uses petrol to blow eight-foot tongues of flame into the air during his act.

Not content with merely thrusting his torch

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Lofty the giant is a friend of the Collins family, as well as being a star turn. He is 9 ft. 3½ in. tall

Lemo the lioness, another of the acts that Collins presented, was so tame she slept at the foot of her trainer's bed

Thea Alba, known as The Woman with Ten Brains, can write with both hands and feet simultaneously

By manipulating his skull to give varying notes, Professor Cheer could make his head react like a xylophone. He let Collins play "Tiptoe Through The Tulips"

"Tea-to-witchee-ee-ee!"

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

When an Eskimo woman calls "Tea-to-witchee-ee-ee!" from her winter igloo or summer caribou-skin tent, everyone flocks to her side. It is the irresistible invitation to tea. An hour later, the same call from another woman, and again another 'mug-up', the Canadian trappers' version of our 'cuppa'. No matter the time of day, tea parties go on, almost continuously.

No gas rings, cookers or electric kettles for Mrs. Eskimo. She boils her water on a seal- or whale-blubber oil lamp. Mugs are lined up, and when the tea is served, bits of ice are dropped in to cool it. Then, probably with bannocks made from rancid flour, water, seal oil and baking powder, the party begins to enjoy its tea.

(With grateful acknowledgement of the help given by the Staff of the High Commissioner for Canada, Mr. Harrington's book-'The Face of the Arctic,' and the National Geographic Magazine)

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Brooke Bond *good tea-and FRESH!*

A billion daughters come to dinner

by JOHN CROMPTON

Female aphids are the world's fastest breeding insects. They would starve all other life—if their enemies allowed them

A plum shoot attacked by the plum aphid. One aphid's progeny, left unchecked, could outweigh the human population of China

IN an open field at Cardington, near Bedford, experiments carried out with a barrage balloon and a net have revealed a great deal about the habits of aphids—more generally known as greenfly. The aphids usually seen in a garden seem to be almost incapable of movement, and lie packed solid under leaves or on the young shoots of plants. But the Cardington experiments have shown that, at certain times of the year, aphids travel in flocks of prodigious numbers and at altitudes of two thousand feet or more.

It is a well-known fact that aphids produce winged forms which infect fresh plants by flitting from garden to garden or field to field. But until recently they were thought never to fly much farther than that. True, living aphids had been found in large numbers on the snow near the Arctic circle on at least two occasions, and they must have flown hundreds of miles to get there. They had also been observed over the North Sea and English Channel, travelling with the wind towards Britain. But such flights were regarded as exceptional—merely freak occurrences.

We now know that this is not so. At Cardington, a funnel-shaped tow-net was attached to the mooring cable of the barrage balloon, in such a way that it could be run up the cable to any height and electrically opened when in the desired position. It then stood out to the wind and intercepted all insects carried into it. At the end of a specified time it was electrically closed, hauled down and the catch examined and counted—laborious work. Like this, over periods, an accurate chart was made of the aphids in the air at different heights and times, and in different weather conditions. Other insects were intercepted by the net, of course, but it was aphids on which the workers at Cardington were concentrating. In any case, the aphids in the air above us far outnumber all other insects.

The experiments show that there are three main high-altitude flights of aphids during the year—in May, July and October. These are related to what we know of their feeding and breeding habits.

The life cycle starts with the eggs, which are laid in autumn on woody trees or shrubs. They may be seen with a pocket lens as tiny grey specks, apparently engrained in the bark. They are resistant to cold, however severe, but certain sprays will prevent them hatching. In the spring they hatch out into female wingless aphids.

At this stage there is no male aphid in existence, nor will there be until the chill days of autumn. In spite of this, eight days after emerging from the egg, the young females, though unfertilized, give birth, not to eggs but to living young. Again all are females, which themselves start breeding daughters in another eight days, and breeding them several times a day. And so it goes on throughout the season.

After two or three weeks on the tree, winged as well as wingless forms appear, and later on the winged aphids fly off and settle on their summer vegetation—usually completely different in character from the plant on which they were raised. There they breed again (aphids never stop breeding, though cold weather will slow the tempo down), producing winged and wingless young. Only winter puts a stop to their activities, though in a heated greenhouse unmated females will keep on breeding females for at least four years, and possibly indefinitely.

At last, towards October, males are born, and they and the winged females fly back to the winter trees. The winged females do not mate with the males they accompany but, on reaching their destination, they give birth to more daughters, all of which are wingless. These latter mate with the males and produce not the usual living young, but *eggs*—female-bearing eggs. So the cycle is completed.

The reason for the three main flights observed at Cardington now becomes obvious. The first main flight, in May, consists of aphids travelling from their winter trees to their summer vegetation. The numbers in this migration are not large by aphid standards, for the insects have not yet had much time to breed. The second main flight takes place at about the end of July. The aphids are now bred to vast numbers, and are redistributing themselves over the

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The winged female aphid breeds continuously all through the summer, without ever mating with the male insect, and produces living young. The wingless female (right) mates with the male aphid and produces eggs—but only female-bearing eggs

The ichneumon fly is among the aphid's worst enemies. It lays an egg inside an aphid, and the hatched grub feeds on the insect before cutting its way out

DRAWINGS BY ERIC SAUNDERS

I reached the french window and pulled it open. "Incidentally," I said, "I've been given a very good alibi for last night . . ."

THE GOLDEN LANTERN

by ***THURMAN WARRINER***

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

What was the secret of Languish Island? I had to find out now . . . before the killer struck again

WARREN CHALMERS had written to me to say he needed help in a matter of life or death. It turned out to be death. Chalmers was killed before I could meet him. . . .

I am Mark Cradford, a country solicitor. I hadn't seen Chalmers since his marriage to Vanessa—the girl who had been my fiancée until Chalmers came along. When I went down to the estuary town of Melhaven, where Chalmers owned an hotel, The Golden Lantern, I was thinking mainly of Vanessa. Whatever her husband was mixed up in, I didn't want her to be hurt.

I was supposed to meet him in a pub called the Dolphin. He didn't appear—but Vanessa did. She introduced me to the two men with her, Joel Reardon and Ross Malin. I didn't like either of them. Malin said Chalmers had taken his yacht, Flirtation—they were all yachting enthusiasts in Melhaven—to a place called Languish Island.

Walking on the quay, later that night, I met a golden-haired girl called Elva Peterson, and had supper aboard her boat, a tubby little craft named Swallow. When I went ashore, Elva warned me to be careful—and lent me a gun. I thought it was a young girl's fantasy until, on my way back to the Dolphin, someone tried to run me down . . . using my car for the attempt.

Early next day Elva and I went out to Flirtation, which was anchored in the river. I hoped to find Chalmers aboard—and I did. He was in the saloon, his skull crushed by a blow from behind. . . . I had an unpleasant half-hour with the police. Inspector Watkins left me in no doubt about who was the chief suspect.

I went to see Vanessa. I wanted to tell her why I was in Melhaven and to offer her my help—but I had forgotten Joel Reardon and Ross Malin. I found myself talking to a committee; the two men seemed openly hostile.

Malin suggested that my love for Vanessa gave me a motive for murdering Chalmers. "You could easily have met Warren accidentally and preserved a façade of friendliness for a while," he said. "And then, stung by some remark he made, you killed him in the heat of the moment. . . ."

PART TWO

I Meet The Commander

I TOOK a long time to fill my pipe, and I only did that to steady my nerves. "An interesting theory," I said ironically, "but it won't work. I may have burned Warren's letter, but my memory's good. You don't think I'd have come all this way without knowing why he wanted me here?"

The whole climate had subtly changed. It was Vanessa herself who revealed that by the way she looked at Ross Malin and Reardon.

"Ross——" she began.

"Shut up, Van!"

Malin spoke without turning his head towards her, without taking that smile off his face, and I felt a clutching contraction of the stomach muscles. I knew I wasn't going to get out of that room alive unless a miracle happened.

It did. A man and woman were playing with two children on the lawn outside. I moved to the window—a french window—and turned the door knob. Nothing could happen now in that room without witnesses.

"There's always another day," Malin said gently, and Vanessa sighed; a long, relieved exhalation. I hadn't expected her to jump to my assistance. But there was something unnatural about the way she sat there without moving or speaking.

"I'll risk what happens tomorrow," I said, and pulled open the window. I turned with the door knob in my hand. "Incidentally, I've been given a very satisfactory alibi for last night. I was with a girl called Elva Peterson in the cabin of her boat till well after midnight."

Joel Reardon looked at me and said: "I suppose you realize that the alibi she's given you could be an attempt to create one for herself? She had plenty of motive for killing Warren. Her brother, Geoffrey, was recently jailed for treason, you know—and the chief witness at his trial was Warren Chalmers."

I shut the window and walked across the lawn. For the second time that day I felt as if I'd had a blow in the stomach.

Coming into Melhaven, I unconsciously avoided the quay. I didn't feel equal to discussing Reardon's remarks with Elva Peterson—yet.

By now I was bitterly regretting the bluff I'd tried to put over. I hadn't the faintest idea why Warren Chalmers had asked me to come. But they thought I knew all about it, and that put me half over a precipice.

So far as I could think, I'd only one link with whatever had happened yesterday—the curiously named Languish Island. I asked an old man where it was.

He said it wasn't an island at all, though it had been at one time and pretty nearly was now—at high water. It was a spit of land five miles due west of Melhaven, provided you'd got a boat. If you went round by road it was a good twenty.

"What's there?" I asked. "A village?"

"Ain't no village now. Used to be a pub and two or three cottages, but they've blowed away. Pretty nigh everything's blowed away but the Commander's house."

I pricked up my ears at that, and asked who the Commander might be.

"The Commander, sir? Oh, big yachtsman, Commander Barnwell. Secretary of the Royal Melhaven."

Five minutes later I was driving out of Melhaven on my way to Languish Island. There was little enough to see when I got there. Rolling dunes stretched for miles. On a small plateau of high ground with a fringe of wind-swept pines beyond, I could see a house which was probably the one I was looking for. It had a wide, glass-fronted veranda.

I rang a bell beside the door at the end of the veranda, and the door was opened by a man in soiled white trousers, a heavy sweater and rubber boots. I judged him to be about fifty-five.

"Commander Barnwell?" I said. "If you can spare me a few minutes, I'd like to talk to you about Warren Chalmers."

His bull-neck turned an angry red. "Warren Chalmers is the last man I'd damn well want to discuss with anybody," he snapped.

I thought he was going to shut the door, so I

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It was all over in a few seconds, and Ollett's attacker disappeared among the dunes. Elva ran, while I limped after her as best I could

At a London antique shop, Miss Slater shows visitors a collection of old china models

Grace Slater's shopping spree

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Her motto is: "I can find you anything in London." She spends her time looking for the bargains that other people want to buy

ON the morning when the woman from Minnesota telephoned, Grace Slater was shampooing her auburn hair. It may have been the soap in her ears, but Miss Slater was sure her caller asked: "Do you know where I can get a grasshopper clock?"

Without hesitation, Grace Slater replied: "Of course, but it may take a little while. Call me back in two days' time."

Staring at the pencilled note "grasshopper clock," Miss Slater recognized a challenge to her slogan, "I can find you anything in London." A tall, handsome woman nearing fifty, she has a St. John's Wood flat where she runs a shopping service that has an international reputation for finding bargains.

The Sultan of Brunei (Borneo) sent her in search of rugs for the mosque that he is building for his people. A Swiss millionaire commissioned her to find a veil for his daughter's wedding. Relatives of a diplomat going to Turkey asked her to supply him with 300 lb. of stone-ground wholemeal flour. Americans use Miss Slater's services to buy anything from an aquarium to a zircon.

No one had ever asked for a grasshopper clock. Miss Slater called an amateur horologist who explained that such timepieces exist and get their name from an escapement that resembles the hind legs of a grasshopper. He sent her to a shop in New Oxford Street that specializes in old clocks and watches.

The firm confirmed the existence of grasshopper clocks and produced reference books describing them. From there the trail led to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

When the Minnesota woman telephoned again, Miss Slater was primed with information regarding grasshopper clocks, including the fact that the only available one was in a Greenwich museum and not for sale.

Before Miss Slater could deliver her negative report on two days' searching the caller asked: "Have you found me a *grandfather* clock?"

Reacting quickly, Miss Slater abandoned her notes on grasshoppers and made an appointment to show the woman a collection of grandfather clocks that same day.

The notes on grasshopper clocks went into the collection of filing cards that represents Grace Slater's business capital. It lists specialist shops and dealers who pay her a commission on goods sold to customers whom she introduces.

"We pay a ten per cent commission to a number of well-to-do people who bring us customers," says the owner of one Bond Street gallery, "but Grace Slater is the only person I know who has made a successful career on this basis."

Shops observing this custom range from elegant Mayfair galleries to back-street craftsmen. "Some of the finest French furniture," Miss Slater says, "is stored in an old garage in Maida Vale."

Another furniture shop off Oxford Street, to which Miss Slater steers customers, has chairs hanging from the ceilings and period pieces piled in stacks. When an engaged couple in Wales asked for a Louis XVIth wedding bed, she went to this place and helped the old lady who runs it to shift furniture until they found an ornate bedstead.

The couple were so pleased with their purchase that they asked for a wardrobe to match. Miss Slater knew of one at the back of another shop. On an earlier visit a salesman had pointed it out as a white elephant. This fact had been entered in the Slater filing system and, as a result, the wardrobe went to Wales.

A NEW YORK business man asked Miss Slater to go shopping with him for a desk. He wanted something out of the ordinary and intimated that price was a secondary consideration. The filing system yielded entries about a score of dealers with handsome desks for sale.

For a day and a half Miss Slater did nothing but look at desks. Going from shop to shop she examined finishes, tested drawers and looked for faults in a total of forty-four expensive antique specimens. From these she selected three to show her client.

On the way home from the forty-fourth desk, Miss Slater slipped and fell on the platform of a bus, cracking a rib. Her doctor taped her up and advised complete rest. But he underestimated her shopping zeal. Having examined forty-four desks, Miss Slater would not let injury stop her completing the assignment.

She showed the New Yorker her three choices. One, a horseshoe model, he bought immediately. A few minutes later he ordered a second in the same shop. When Miss Slater showed him a few matching accessories, including an inkwell and a receptacle for pens and pencils, he added them to his bill.

"I could have told him over the telephone where to find the desks," Miss Slater says. "By going with him, I helped him to find other things. In the end my commission was enough to let me take a month off to recover from my accident."

Miss Slater's most prosperous morning was one June day when a group of Texans asked for her help in finding a Queen Anne bureau bookcase. They were precise in describing what they wanted and said that they had been looking for two years without success.

Five minutes after receiving this request, Miss Slater had located the bookcase. Finished in black with gold lacquer and with scarlet lined drawers and pigeon-holes, it belonged to a Bond Street dealer. The price was £1,200.

Miss Slater took her clients to see it. They were ready to buy when the dealer's representative told them that another customer had a two weeks' option on the bookcase.

The disappointed Texans pleaded for the opportunity to buy immediately and, to gain the dealer's goodwill, they purchased some other pieces from his collection.

Finally, the holder of the option was found and he agreed to waive his claim on the bookcase. By the time Miss Slater's Texans left the gallery they had spent £3,000.

Money rarely enters into the relationship between Miss Slater and her clients. They pay nothing for her services and only occasionally does one of them jeopardize her commission by bargaining with the dealer. "When this happens," Miss Slater says, "the dealers are

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Ready for battle – on two tin legs

by COLIN HODGKINSON

After months of pain I could walk. Now I was desperate to fly. When the call came I practically danced a jig

SURGEON-CAPTAIN BRIGGS, of the naval hospital near Bristol, stared at me. As a pupil pilot in the Fleet Air Arm I had lost my right leg in an accident on a training flight. That was in May, 1939. Now it was January, 1940, and I had read of a legless pilot, named Bader, who was back in the air, fighting the enemy.

I was inspired with a desire to fly against the enemy, too. But my remaining leg, though it might heal, would never be sound enough for flying. I asked Surgeon-Captain Briggs whether it would not be better to amputate it, too.

For a moment he was unwilling to believe that I was in earnest.

"It isn't so serious as all that, you know. There is a chance of it healing completely."

"I've had six operations on it, sir, and it seems to get no better."

"Let's have another look."

The nurse removed the dressings and Briggs bent over the leg. "Have you pain all the time?"

"Very often, sir, and the smell is getting me down."

"That will disappear as it heals." He probed between the toes.

"No feeling here?"

"None, sir."

He straightened up and looked at me thoughtfully. The nurse put back the dressings and adjusted the cradle.

"It's a very grave decision," he said after a full minute. "And I can't advise it. You understand that? Any decision must come from you."

I nodded, and my courage went back a step. The difference between having one leg and having none was suddenly enormous.

I asked if we could have a final opinion from outside, and he agreed at once. We went through a list of leading orthopaedic surgeons who might be available for consultation.

Briggs finally decided on an eminent specialist attached to one of the London teaching hospitals, who had joined or been impressed into the navy as surgeon rear-admiral. After some telephoning I was told that the examination would be next week.

I didn't tell Mollie, as I always called my mother, of my decision. Indeed, my decision had not yet been clinched. It was still something which I took up, looked at and put down, like some rare object which one desires but whose price is terrifying. I had no notion how a legless man got through the small necessary actions of living.

For the next six days I thought of myself as legless, as if my will could slough the leg away. It didn't belong to me. It was something shameful, an excrescence, a malignant growth that had to be uprooted. I disowned it. I hated it. I cursed it. All in all, this was mentally the strangest week of my life.

The specialist, a thin, dignified man of medium height with sandy, greying hair, impressed me at once. After a long and thorough examination he said that it was questionable whether my leg would ever completely heal. He held up the X-ray plates and became technical. I wasn't listening. I put my hand under the cradle and pinched my right stump. I moved my left ankle and felt the familiar dragging pain. I thought of Bader and the air; of Spitfires and dog fights; of a squadron mess and of the men in it. Of myself as part of it, on equal terms with my companions.

Then I was aware of silence; the specialist's lecture was over. He and Briggs were waiting. This was the moment; it was up to me. I took a deep breath.

"Chop it off," I almost shouted. "Chop the damned thing off and let's be rid of it!"

The specialist didn't move a muscle. Briggs came in with his serious voice.

"Is that really what you want, Hodgkinson? You must be quite sure, you know."

But the words were out, I had heard myself saying them. I didn't want to think about it any more. I turned to him. "I'm quite sure," I said. "Quite sure."

The operation took place on March 15. The surgeon took the leg off five inches below the knee, which left a discrepancy between my left stump and right of about eighteen inches.

The next day, when the drugs had worn off, I lifted the sheet and looked down at myself. The sight was not shocking but weird. Like a pair of broken compasses, I thought.

The operation had been successful. The stump healed well and the pain gradually seeped away.

Exactly two months later, Briggs told me that I could be moved to Roehampton; the first step was about to be taken.

Queen Mary's Hospital at Roehampton accommodated the workshops where artificial limbs of

At Aston Down, Hodgkinson (left) was taught by Pilot Officer Jones to fly Spitfires. As a celebration he bought himself a new car

One-legged Denis Dammers was Colin's instructor. They also shared a room

Florence Desmond's husband, Charles Hughesden, gave Colin his first flight without legs—in a private plane

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Archie McIndoe, the plastic surgeon (seen with his wife) operated on Colin's left eye. When he heard that Colin was keen to fly again he told him: "Keep in touch. We'll see what we can do"

Pupils and veterans mixed at Aston Down. Colin made a friend in "Shep" Shepherd, an Australian

every kind were made under the order of the Ministry of Pensions.

The first things to happen there were that I was given a wheelchair and had the preliminary fittings of my legs. I had imagined that tin legs were selected for size and simply clamped on with the hit-and-miss method of buying a pair of shoes. Disenchantment came when Arthur Gear and Tom Beal, my fitters, told me that it might be a fortnight before I could have a first fitting.

Gear was a thin, grey-haired man with an aquiline face and a wry but never destructive sense of humour. Beal, with horn-rimmed spectacles, a bushy moustache and a head almost totally bald, had a less incisive manner. Both were elderly family men with great experience and perfect understanding of the limbless.

The long, high-ceilinged room in which they worked bore a slightly surrealist appearance. Salmon-pink and beige metal legs, some with straps and harness attached, were arranged in little clusters on the floor and round the walls. Cylindrical things ending in leather claws hung in neat rows. I felt that it wouldn't have surprised me to see a head stuck in a flower-pot. The smell was a cross between that of a clinic and a paint shop.

Slightly shaken, I announced my ultimatum in a pedantic way. "I want you to understand now that I am going back to flying an aeroplane and that I will never use crutches or a stick."

Neither of their faces gave a flicker. "That's fine," said Beal. "Let's have a look at you."

I undid my trousers to show the stumps. It was an odd moment. Not because I was diffident, but because I was for the first time looking at my stumps in a new way. Sitting there, while Beal and Gear went over them, I saw that it was of the highest importance never to be ashamed of my stumps, never to think of them for a moment as being useless or a handicap. That state of mind meant crutches and a stick, and I had determined to do without both.

"What was your height and weight at the time of the accident?" Beal asked.

"Just over six feet and thirteen and a half stone."

"We'll have to bring you down a couple of inches, I'm afraid. Walking with these things is a heave and a kick, and the nearer you are to the ground the easier it is to walk."

"And," Gear added seriously, "you'll not have so far to fall."

I saw the point. Five feet ten, after all, was still above normal height.

Beal, the below-knee expert, then examined the left stump. Ideally, leg stumps should taper to a point and be hard and muscled. My right one, due to the long lie in bed, was in poor condition. The left one was soft but orthodox in shape. Beal rolled a thin woollen sock over it, which he then smoothed with plaster. After a few minutes he had withdrawn the sock, taking with it an accurate impression of the face and contour of the extremity.

When Beal had finished, Gear took over on the right stump. Then he said: "O.K. We'll let you know when to come along again. What size shoe did you take?"

I told them ten. I was getting used to the past tense.

"That's far too big," said Gear. "Can you get yourself a pair of eights?"

"They'll look nice and dainty," said Beal. "And think of the money you'll save in socks."

The humour sounds weak, but it was just what I needed. I pulled up my trousers and trundled out on my wheelchair. There had not been a word of pity.

AGAINST a background of Dunkirk, the splendid snarl of Churchill's "no surrender" speech and meeting a flow of survivors from France, I began my attempts to walk.

The first sight of my tin legs was intimidating. I was unprepared for the thick belt and the harness; I had thought of them as neater, less fussy appliances. I was to discover soon that they were in fact highly ingenious mechanisms, built with rigorous economy of material.

Beal, after I had sat down and stripped, eased a sock over the left stump and sank it into a leather socket sheathed in the calf of the new leg. Above this, metal bars hinged at the knee ended in a corset which was tightened round my thigh. My right stump, also with a sock, was guided by Gear into a very deep bucket terminating just below the groin.

Straps were attached to the top of the bucket which was attached to a body belt. To this belt Beal buckled the thigh corset of the left leg. With one hand on Beal's left and the other on Gear's right shoulder, I hauled myself up and forward. For the first time in more than twelve months I was standing on my feet.

My first sensation was one of utter dismay, of something so alien, impossible and unnatural that my body refused to accept it. My right stump, wasted and flabby, pinched intolerably. The left gave the sensation of its terminal bones splaying out against the pressure of the socket. The harness, far from supporting me, seemed to be pulling me forward. Dizzy, and in a moment of despair, I lowered myself back to the stool.

Beal and Gear looked at me humorously.

"Bit strange, isn't it?" said Gear. "Everyone feels that. Now up you come again."

This time I was ready for the pinching, and the sensation that my left stump was being split upwards. But I couldn't move. Nothing in my nervous or muscular system gave me the smallest clue as to how I could swing one leg before the other.

Leaning heavily on Gear and Beal I somehow managed two or three steps. My left leg, flexing at my natural knee, was easier to manage; "easier" in this case being strictly relative. The hip stump, Gear explained, had to be moved vigorously forward to clear the lower joint from the ground, flexed backwards, then finally heaved ahead with the impetus of movement. I understood the theory, but how was I to overcome the frightening sensation that my trunk was divorced from my legs?

Every tottering move gave me the unnerving sensation of a stairway step which wasn't there. They took me over to a set of parallel bars, just below waist high, between which I heaved and staggered for another twenty minutes. But I was still very weak and lacked the leverage in my arms to support myself upright. Aching all over and more than a little dispirited, I was helped back to the stool, where Gear loosened the harness and removed the legs. Both men examined my stumps attentively. The left appeared to be a good fit, although wealed and red. The hip stump, however, was badly chafed. My fitters judged the necessary adjustments, tucked me up in my chair and told me to return in a couple of days. The first steps were over.

The next month was physically the most strenuous of my life. Two sticks; then one. Finally to no stick at all. The sweltering hot summer did nothing to help. The heat swelled my hip stump painfully. Very early on, still wasted and soft, it was rubbed raw and began to blister. At night I would rub the whole stump with methylated spirits in an effort to harden the skin. Specially painful were the nerve ends round the incision. Pressure on these was exactly as if someone were systematically and continually tapping at a row of sensitive corns.

The fact is that I was, as yet, physically in no condition to attempt the experiment of walking, and Beal and Gear urged me more than once to give myself the time to build up flesh and muscle. This I refused to do.

Gratitude is a paltry word to express what I

Continued on page 37

The Maiden a

This painting meant all to Gino... fa
Francesca! But why did she ru

VIA VITTORIA might be the poorest street in San Stephano, but its heart beat the warmest and its loyalty was of the staunchest calibre. For years, for instance, the washerwomen and the barrow boys and all the other humble folk of the Vittoria had been asserting that Gino Frascalli, who lived in a bare room above Bianca's wine shop and who as yet had not earned a lira from his brush, was the finest living painter in the whole of Italy.

And on this momentous day, as Gino left his room above Bianca's for the fateful interview timed for three o'clock in the old town hall, they called to him from windows, doors, and sun-splashed balconies where red geraniums blazed and pomegranates ripened. They wished him luck and told him not to worry. For surely, they added, unless the mayor was absolutely blind stupid, he, Gino Frascalli of the Via Vittoria, would get the commission.

Poor Gino, of humble and unassuming disposition, had none of their happy confidence in the outcome of the interview. However, of one thing he felt certain—that the large sample canvas of mural designs which he clutched under his arm, wrapped for safety in a piece of sailcloth, was the best thing he had ever done.

The old town hall, to which he was hurrying, was a dilapidated two-storey building with a sagging roof, a converted distiller's warehouse. But there was in the process of being built, in San Stephano, a new town hall. This was a magnificent affair of superb architectural design, for San Stephano was a harbour town rapidly growing in size and importance. The new town hall was to have murals in the civic dining-room, and Gino's aim was to secure the commission for these murals.

As Gino reached the corner of the Via Vittoria, Renato Apollonio came and stood in his café doorway. Renato, whose round, cherubic countenance was somewhat marred by his diabolical moustachios, beamed at Gino.

"Hey, Gino! When you come back we have a grand party for all the Via Vittoria to celebrate, eh? We will have the best wine—and a bouquet for La Bella Francesca."

At the thought of himself and his beloved Francesca celebrating victory, Gino felt as if the sun had blazed with singular brilliance on him and exploded in a cannonade of joy. A bouquet for Francesca! The whole world for Francesca if he got the commission!

"And, Gino!" Renato called after him. "Even if you do not get the commission, we will have a party just the same." He gave Gino a mournful wink. "To drown our sorrows."

Gino sighed. It was because of Francesca that it was so important for him to be successful at

Francesca snatched the canvas from Gino, pushed

nd the Mayor

by EDITH JOYCE SMITH

me, fortune—and
off with his chances?

the coming interview. The artist who painted the murals in the new town hall would have a status which a dishwasher at the Hotel Paradiso did not have. And if the work was good, it would be noticed and then there would be many more commissions to advance him on the road to success—the altar backcloth in the new cathedral at Porto Tintoretto, for instance.

Such triumphs would make it possible for Gino to ask Francesca's eminent father, Lorenzo Giacinto—who, incidentally, was on the interviewing committee at the town hall—for her hand in marriage.

Failure, on the other hand, would make such a request a pathetic waste of time. Lorenzo Giacinto, deputy mayor of San Stephano and proprietor of a chain of high-class restaurants, had already turned down two suitors for Francesca's hand—a toreador from Spain who was rich but socially unacceptable, and a diplomat from Rome who was socially acceptable but comparatively poor. Gino knew full well that, as a dishwasher, he had at present less social standing than any toreador and far less money than the most impecunious diplomat.

Even Francesca realized that. She had not dared to tell her father that it was Gino she loved. . . .

To show to the committee at the town hall, Gino had painted a Lautrec-style picture of Renato Apollonio, beaming in his café doorway and looking the epitome of all the trade and life and bubbling good humour of San Stephano. He had felt so pleased with the painting at the time, but now, as he reached the market square, where the old town hall stood, leaning drunkenly in the sunlight, his qualms grew. Was Renato a suitable subject to impress the committee? Should he perhaps have chosen a more dignified theme?

Gino looked apprehensively at the crooked, sun-shaded windows of the town hall, behind which was assembled the committee he was to face at the interview at three. He glanced at the clock in the tower. The black fingers on the white face registered five minutes to the hour.

He tried to relax and assume an easy, confident air that would help to impress the committee. He began to whistle. The distance between himself and the flight of steps leading to the town hall was growing shorter. He walked down one side of the square, under the sunny, blue-washed porticoes of the shopping arcade, across the market square cobblestones, cutting off a corner, past a large parked limousine belonging to the mayor; past a road sweeper, and three fruit carts in a row; and then

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another into his arms and was away like the wind

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

Mountaineers of darkness

by REX GRIZELL

Men like Edgar Smith defy mystery underground. They climb precipices and waterfalls hidden in perpetual night

Edgar Smith wears a headlight-fitted helmet for protection. He began potholing at sixteen and has often been close to danger

Smith descends a rock face leading into the earth. On one climb a potholer who fell was carried up nine sheer precipices to safety

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

On a Pennine hillside one day last year members of the Craven Pothole Club dammed a fast-flowing stream which normally plunged underground through a fissure in the rock. When the stream had been diverted, Edgar Smith, one of Yorkshire's veteran potholers, and three companions squeezed down into the fissure to start their underground exploration of the water course.

They had not gone far when they came to a forty-foot vertical drop. They climbed down this "pitch," using a rope-ladder that they carried. At the bottom they entered a natural tunnel less than three feet high. They had crawled some way along the bed of the stream when a faint shout from the surface reached them. The dam had burst. Seconds later they heard the pent-up water rushing down on them.

"We were trapped," says Smith, a burly, red-faced man in his forties. "There was nowhere to get away from the water. We could not even stand up. In no time it reached our shoulders. I told the lads we would be all right, but I had my fingers crossed. Luckily, it didn't come any higher and we were able to force our way out against the stream."

There is no more dangerous and uncomfortable sport than potholing. Deep underground, potholers have been trapped by flood, by falls of rock, and by failures of their headlamps which left them in impenetrable blackness. Even with lights, parties have become hopelessly lost in a maze of caves and passages. Men have fallen from narrow ledges or sheer rock faces into deep pools of icy water. Others, overcome by exhaustion, have fallen from rope-ladders while scaling underground precipices. On uneventful days potholers are alternately sweating with exertion and soaked to the skin wading deep pools, crawling along streams, or climbing through waterfalls. After as much as sixteen hours underground they emerge sodden, bruised and exhausted.

The strain is nervous as well as physical. Smith was once leading through a long tunnel on hands and knees when the man behind him declared that the place was closing in. "In a few moments he was screaming with hysteria. We had to hold him down to stop him injuring himself as he tried frantically to stand up." This man had been down potholes several times without showing any signs of being claustrophobic. He has never been down since.

The Pennine caves, like all large caves, are formed in limestone strata. Mountain streams percolate through tiny crevices in the limestone, until the crevices become channels, the channels tunnels, and the tunnels caves. The Pennine system, though pre-glacial in origin, is still active. Water pours through it, blocking and unblocking the smaller passages, silting up streams and ponds, searching out new courses. Many of the hills are honeycombed. When a bonfire was lit at the bottom of one pothole, smoke emerged from more than twenty places on the hillside.

Gaping Ghyll, on the slopes of Ingleborough, has been described by an international speleologist as one of the most impressive caverns in the world. Here, Fell Beck, a mountain torrent, pours over a ledge in a straight drop of nearly four hundred feet to the floor of a cave large enough to hold a cathedral and its spire. From the central chamber numerous passages lead to other caves and then by tortuous routes link up with nearby potholes. Part of the system, known as Lancaster Hole, is particularly complicated.

On one occasion three members of the Craven Club became lost on an exploration of Lancaster Hole. For twelve hours they searched without finding the way out. Then they gave up and lay down to rest. It was a further three hours before rescuers found them.

"A potholer must always conserve enough strength to return the way he has come, remembering that he will be climbing up, not down," says Smith. Exhaustion is directly responsible for most potholing accidents. "Anyone who has painted a ceiling knows the strain of keeping the arms over the head for long periods. For a tired man the strain of climbing a rope-ladder can become intolerable." In a fatal accident last year an experienced potholer's arms gave out near the top of a pitch and he fell backwards off the ladder, fracturing his skull.

Down a pothole a sprained ankle or wrist "is as bad as a broken leg," says Smith. "Either means the man cannot move. A simple rescue may take six or seven hours. It's ample time for a man, wet and cold, to die from shock and exposure."

When some members of the Craven Club made their first exploration of a pothole on the slopes of Penyghent, one of them, Johnny Frankland, fell twenty feet into a pool, hitting a jagged rock just below the surface. The fall knocked him out and badly injured his shoulder.

When Frankland recovered consciousness he was unable even to stand. He was three hundred feet underground and more than half a mile from the exit, with nine rock precipices between him and safety.

The accident occurred at four in the afternoon. Frankland had already been underground more than six hours.

The first rescue party entered at 8 p.m. Relieving each other at intervals, rescue parties worked all through the night, and all through the next day trying to get the helpless Frankland to the surface. More than forty men took part in

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the rescue. Eventually Frankland was brought out at twenty to six in the evening of his second day underground, more than twenty-five hours after he had fallen.

All this time he had been numb with cold and soaked to the skin, having been repeatedly dragged or lifted through water. He had been unable to keep down any food but an occasional hot drink and a biscuit.

Several men received minor injuries during the rescue. Smith, who spent seven hours with Frankland, had knee injuries which took two years to clear up.

After a spell in hospital Frankland recovered and is still one of the club's most active members.

In cave systems where there is a lot of water, rubber dinghies or inflatable canoes are used to cross underground lakes and rivers. Smith and three companions were exploring such a system in Ireland. Two of the men used a dinghy to follow a river which ran through a tunnel. Smith and a friend went by a ledge along one side of the water and over a long rock bridge which formed the roof of the tunnel. As Smith reached the other side the dinghy shot out, empty.

The speed of the stream had carried the men in the dinghy against the low roof and knocked them into the water. Their helmets saved them from being knocked out and possible drowning, and they crawled to safety.

In spite of the hazards and discomforts of potholing it is a sport fast growing in popularity. In 1935 there were only six clubs in the country; today there are about twenty-five big clubs and many smaller ones.

The Craven Club, formed in 1930, is the oldest club formed for potholing, and, with nearly two hundred members, is the largest. Membership is confined to men.

Beyond saying that caves, like mountains, offer men a challenge with an element of mystery, potholers have difficulty in explaining the attraction of their sport.

"It's all very democratic," says Smith, who is a part-time fireman and a partner in a boot and shoe repair business. "Doctors, bankers, factory hands, policemen, farmers, chemists, students, all work together in teams underground. Potholing cannot be done alone, and individuality is regarded with suspicion because it is not safe."

"I don't like my cooking either—
but you don't hear me complaining"

Members of the Craven Club do not confine their potholing to the Craven district. Parties have visited limestone regions of Northern Ireland, South Wales—where two men were trapped for three days in a flooded cave—Somerset, France and Yugoslavia. One club member, Robert Powell, took part in the 1956 descent of the Gouffre Berger, near Grenoble in Southern France.

Powell and other members of the international party reached a world record depth of 3,600 feet, after spending a week underground.

Many Craven Club members have other interests in caving, apart from the excitement of exploration. Some study underground fauna, the blind, colourless trout and shrimps to be found in some underground rivers, bats and rare insects. Other members are geologists or archaeologists. Caves were the first homes of men and are rich in remains of primitive societies. Fibre sandals found in a cave in Western America were dated—by radio-active carbon test—as 7000 B.C.

In caves deep in now uninhabited jungle of Indonesia are galleries of carved stone gods of unknown origin. Shaggy ponies with crude fur saddles have been found standing frozen stiff by the sub-zero air of Siberian caves where they were entombed two thousand years ago.

In British caves, bones of animals extinct here for many thousands of years have been discovered. A three thousand year old gold bracelet was found recently in a Somerset cave.

Smith, who started potholing at sixteen, regularly drives the club bus, and takes a particular interest in the tackle used underground. It used to take six men several evenings to make a twenty-five foot rope-ladder. Smith designed a new type of ladder which one man can make in an evening. It proved so successful that it was chosen for use on the Kanchenjunga expedition.

In some caves cuts and abrasions must be treated at once to avoid blood poisoning. Smith recently poisoned his hand so badly in one cave that he could not use it for a week. "That time there was no visible scratch on the hand," he says.

He considers his most nerve-racking experience occurred at Alum Pot, one of the best known and most dangerous potholes in Yorkshire. From the edge to the bottom there is a straight drop of 295 feet, and the pot is usually filled with mist and spray to within thirty feet of the top. In years gone by local people considered it a "mouth of hell" and an abode of witches.

SMITH and some friends decided to enter Alum Pot through a passage called Long Churn, which joins it halfway down one side, rather as a hollow handle joins a saucepan. Before going into Long Churn, Smith lowered the tackle into the main part of the pot on a rope belayed around a tree near the edge of Alum Pot. He left the rope there so that it would be ready to haul the tackle out afterwards.

When he emerged from Long Churn passage on to a four-foot ledge on the side of Alum Pot, he was horrified to see a man coming down the rope hand over hand. "The fact that he was on the rope told me at once that he was not a potholer and did not know what he was doing," says Smith. "I guessed that he had seen the rope disappearing into the mist comparatively close to the top, and had assumed that it finished a few feet farther down."

The man was already sixty feet down the rope when Smith saw him and had as far to go again to reach the ledge that Smith was on.

"They were bad moments watching him. If his nerve or his strength gave out he would fall two hundred feet to certain death. There was nothing we could do to help him."

When the man reached the ledge Smith had to hold him up. "He was trembling all over. It was some time before he could speak or move. We had to put a lifeline on him to haul him out. When he had calmed down a bit, he swore he'd never go near a pothole again as long as he lived." THE END

Grace Slater's shopping spree

Continued from page 16

usually generous about adjusting my commission."

As a shopping consultant, Grace Slater keeps no stock and only rarely makes purchases herself. One of the few times when she used her own money was when a client stumped her with a request for an Apostle jug. Concealing her ignorance of what it was, she asked for a week in which to find one.

A pottery dealer explained that Apostle jugs had small figures of the apostles in niches and that they were rare. Miss Slater tramped from shop to shop without finding one until another customer overheard her request. An elderly retired air force officer, he said that he had an Apostle jug at home and offered it to her for a nominal sum.

When the client called back, Miss Slater had the jug. The agreed price was five times what she paid for it.

Only once has Miss Slater admitted complete defeat. Returning from a shopping expedition she was greeted by a puzzled secretary who was certain that a client had asked for "cranberry glass and dirty birds."

Miss Slater knew that cranberry glass was the American term for glassware the colour of cranberry juice. To solve "dirty birds" she repeated the words using every American accent she knew. The secretary agreed that it might be the name Doughty as pronounced by an American, and offered a further clue that the client mentioned Cornwall.

A cousin of Miss Slater was Member of Parliament for St. Ives. A call to him revealed that Dorothy Doughty, of Looe, modelled birds for the Worcester Royal Porcelain Co., Ltd. Miss Slater headed for the company's London showrooms. There were the Dorothy Doughty birds, at prices up to 1,000 dollars a pair, and for sale only at authorized dealers in the United States.

Two items that have completely eluded Miss Slater so far, but for which she is still searching, are a Battersea knife box and a pair of bellows.

A Seattle museum wants the bellows to complete the furnishing of a house owned by a man who died in 1759. The stipulation is that the bellows should have been made before that date and be covered in needlepoint.

MEN AND WOMEN—I

If you wish the pick of men and women, take a good bachelor and a good wife.

R. L. Stevenson

Battersea boxes belong to the same period. They were made between 1750 and 1756. Today one of these enamelled pieces big enough to hold cigarettes sells for £50 to £300. Miss Slater wants a knife box for which a client is willing to pay "hundreds of pounds."

Although these two searches are taking time, Miss Slater prefers them to solving the problem posed by an early morning telephone call from a chance acquaintance. "Everyone says you are so helpful," the woman began, "and I really need help. My husband has thrown me out. I'm coming right over to see you."

By the time this self-invited visitor arrived, less than an hour later, Miss Slater was ready for her. "I've found you a flat," she said. "Here's the address, and I think you should go right there and claim it."

Born in London, Grace Slater gained some of her shopping experience during a secretarial and business career. After doing welfare work during the war, she took her first postwar holiday abroad in 1946 and went to Stockholm.

"Fortunately," she recalls, "I had friends in Stockholm who took me shopping. They not only knew the best stores, but they also knew the assistants by name. It made everything easier, and I thought to myself that there should be someone in London who could perform the same sort of service for visitors."

To build up her knowledge of London shops, Miss Slater divided the city into districts and, taking them one at a time, began a one-woman canvass of every shop that might interest visitors. In each she explained her service and, if the dealer agreed to a commission, she listed his specialities.

Business built up gradually until one day she was returning from Sussex with two young Americans when one of them asked her to direct them to Golders Green. "Temple Fielding," the American explained, "says that the most reasonable car hire firm in London is at Golders Green."

"Who is Temple Fielding?" asked Miss Slater. The American handed her a copy of Fielding's *Travel Guide To Europe* and she spent the remainder of the journey studying it. The guide book, which is very popular with Americans, carries no advertising and lists only places and services that the author has tested.

As soon as she got home, Miss Slater wrote to Fielding explaining what she did for visitors to London.

The next edition of Fielding's guide included a paragraph in its London section: "Lazy? Tired? Too busy to make the rounds? Let Grace Slater find whatever you want, better and cheaper. She's savvy and dependable and she can save everybody a bushel of headaches."

Fielding's testimonial also listed Miss Slater's telephone number which soon became busy with American accents.

Two hours before her boat train left, one woman wanted a set of bagpipes. Miss Slater got the pipes for £22 and the client played herself aboard the Queen Mary. A Dutchwoman took a fortnight of Miss Slater's time to furnish a dining-room with genuine Hepplewhite.

A Frenchwoman asked for a medium who would advise her to leave her husband. Miss Slater offered the names of several clairvoyants, but said that she could not forecast what their advice would be.

On the way out of the Frenchwoman's home, Miss Slater admired a set of Hepplewhite chairs.

"They're only reproductions," said her hostess. "My husband won't buy genuine ones."

Taking a shrewd look into her own future, Grace Slater made a note of the craftsman who made the chairs.

The following week a tourist from Dallas telephoned. "Do you know," she inquired, "where I can get a set of reproduction Hepplewhite chairs?"

"Of course," said Miss Slater as if it were the easiest question that she had ever been asked. THE END

Man eater

Continued from page 8

strung out behind. The second cook brought up the rear, to hurry stragglers.

After a hard trek they came to the point the safari car had reached the day before. The zebra pasture was near.

They halted where a small water pool formed in the rocks. Here a tracker, whom the chief herdsman had put on the trail early in the morning, came out of the bush and said that a lion was in the cover just above them. Jan sprang up, reaching for his rifle. Barton achingly picked up his own rifle and followed.

They spoored half an hour, circling back towards their camp on an increasingly hot trail. It was getting dark. Suddenly, not far above the water hole, Jan and the tracker tensed, halting on the near side of a break in the bush. Jan crossed the open space, crouched and peered into the thornbush beyond. He hesitated for a moment, then returned to bring Barton forward, creeping quietly, to see a sleeping lion.

The huge cat was lying belly up, paws kneading the air. It was not the lion they were after. Jan guessed this one belonged to the game reserve.

They went back to camp, and to the usual evening routine when on safari. In the early moonlight they watched the clouds around Kibo Peak. There was practically no conversation. . . .

Dawn, clear, bright and bone-cold, brought news of the wounded lioness. A Kikuyu woodcutter—another member of the alert spy net—reported that she had killed three miles back towards the farm. A large goat had been eaten on the spot at dusk. The lioness had a wounded right eye and was large.

Jan called a porter and a tracker, bolted the rest of his breakfast and picked up the big double. Barton removed his .375 from a canvas case.

"Sure you want to come?" Jan asked. "Heavy dew last night. Trackers will move fast, and I don't intend to slow them."

"If I may," said Barton.

At a hunter's pace they reached the kill in an hour. The remains of the goat were just outside the *boma*. The marks showed the lioness had fumbled, losing grip twice while the goat still kicked. She was getting weak. Unless this meal picked her up, she might slump into habitual man eating.

Jan and the tracker skirted the *boma*. Soon they found a scratch, then a flattened grass tuft with its dew smeared, then, following the alignment between the two, a tumbled grain of gravel which led to a full, healthy pug mark. They were ten hours late, but they were on well-defined spoor. With the wound she might be lying up close.

JAN now was second in line, rifle ready, with one tracker leading and the other at Jan's heels. Jan's eyes were raised, leaving the tracking to the natives. The lioness might charge on sight; or, with greater deadliness, she could set an ambush that would make his rifle useless.

A short .38 special revolver taken from the cartridge bag was belted at Jan's side. At grips, with luck, it could be fired into her chest.

The cover began to thicken. Jan kept the rifle ready, eyes scanning front and sides. He gestured impatiently to Barton, warning him to watch flank and rear. Barton readied his rifle, glancing sideways and rearwards. The pace was hurried but silent.

In an open grass field they lost the spoor. They cast in a widening circle, the trackers searching competitively for a few minutes. Jan, curt and imperative, called them back and jabbed a spear into the ground at the end of the known spoor. Then systematically, in widening circles, they searched all round. Barton kept out of the way, and Jan never seemed to look at him.

They found, on ground gone over twice, a flake of blood on a grass blade, a little scab an ant was dragging away. The scab was softened by dew, but it reddened the grass blade freshly, and a few yards farther along they found a small spot of urine. Into ominously thick cover, then out again and up the steady, panting incline of lower Kilimanjaro, the spoor led on.

For a while the trail was straight, the slanting sunlight marking depressions in the grass. Jan's lips moved quietly as he recapitulated the lioness's movements, noting here a long stand, here a crouch, here a pause to decide a turn. She had behaved as if in strange country—perhaps she was the wrong animal. The trackers watched for blood, and found no more. If she continued uphill like this they would be led into quite impossible hillside thicket.

They were, and the trail became nothing, hopeless. The axis of a dry stream bed seemed a logical continuance and they followed it blindly. Near its end, in dense thicket, they heard a low, short growl. Ahead a tawny flank appeared in the mottling leaves. Jan raised the big rifle, waiting for a chest-cavity or spine shot.

Lion and men stood crystallized, nerves tautening. Jan continued at aim, feeling his heartbeats surge. A feline head passed his rifle sights. He took quick aim, but saw the fore sight slip off the shoulder as the trigger gave.

Instinctively he recovered from the roaring shove of the big double, knowing that the brute, ill-hit, would pivot and charge. The barrels returned to dead aim, and the lion, its spine shattered, tumbled at his feet. It had bounced twenty yards while he snap-fired the second shot.

Instinctively he broke the rifle, ejected the smoking brass and drove in the two rounds clasped between the fingers of his left hand. Before the breech clicked shut he heard a shout behind, and an outsize lioness with an injured right eye, leaping from side cover, crashed into his chest.

The rifle went flying backwards, open and useless. Jan, driven earthwards under the lioness, threw his left arm forward across his throat. He grabbed sideways at the revolver. His elbow struck a rock, numbing his right hand to the wrist. His head hit something hard. While white teeth nuzzled and jockeyed at arm, windpipe and jugular, he fought off unconsciousness.

He knew he would never reach the revolver.

Then he heard a crack like a hippo whip in his ear, coupled to the blast of a rifle; another, followed almost instantly, and the weight on top stiffened and then relaxed into something soft, heavy and wet. He felt it move again and heard a voice, crisp and military, saying: "Help me move it. Come and help. Come. Come." Then he blacked out. . . .

"Don't move," Barton said. "There may be a fracture. I thought I shot you. How do you feel?"

"All right. No. Awful." Jan pulled himself up to a sitting position and then rose shakily to his feet. He had no broken legs or arms, and the bite had missed the large artery in his arm.

"Take a deep breath. Slowly," said Barton. "Any cracked ribs?"

"Don't think so."

"Good. Sit down again. Let me knot this compress and sprinkle the bite."

"A car can get within three miles," said Jan. "I'll send a boy to the farm. Can I walk?"

"Probably," said Barton, now the recognized leader of the party, "after a while. You're not losing much blood. We can take it slowly."

Half-way down the hill, leaning on Barton's shoulder, Jan turned to the remaining tracker, speaking in Masai. The tracker turned back up the hill.

"What's this?" said Barton. "We may need him."

"He's going back for the lion skins. Hyenas might get them. You want the one you shot, don't you?"

"Not that much. You may pass out."

"I'm all right. And you should have that skin. I've never shot a lion off a man, but if I do I'll want the souvenir. Only two miles to go."

They plodded slowly downhill, not speaking. Jan was thinking: *What a fool's error, worse than Wyett, taking two lions for one, shooting fast in tight cover, risking other lives—and owing mine now to this tough tenderfoot.*

They met the car at dusk at an appointed landmark, an outcrop of volcanic rock. Jan's mother and Doctor Stuart were waiting there, and Jan had moved less than twenty feet into the small clearing from the cover when his mother, running like a girl, reached him. She touched his red, caked shirt and gasped.

"Not mine," he said, trying to grin.

"The lioness?"

"With a lion. I shot the lion by mistake. Then she jumped me. Mr. Barton killed her in time. Only half a bite."

DOCTOR STUART helped him into the car and sat beside him.

"The hospital for two days, Jan. New sister there, prettier than Virginia. Now let's have the good arm—the needle, a little pain-killer. Fine. Some penicillin, and two days leering at the new sister, and you'll be back in the firing line."

"Only two days?" said Barton, speaking for the first time. "Can he go on safari in two days?"

"Make it a week and he can wrestle another lion."

"Good," said Barton. "I'd like to take him south for kudu and sable."

Jan looked up suddenly, then shook his head. "I'd like to go. I know the kudu herd near Kibaya and another at Kijungu. But I can't leave the farm."

"Can you leave on premium white hunter's pay? A six months' trip at ten pounds a day and expenses? You can hire a foreman for three quid. And as a bonus I'll give you this safari car."

"But I'll need a professional licence. I don't know if the warden will let me have one."

"That's all arranged. Do you think we drove all the way to Tengeru to ask the Game Department for two mangy lions? Jim talked to the warden. The application is typed and approved. All you have to do is go in and sign it. Jim's leg is getting worse. He wanted to take you on as Number Two right away, but you had to be so damned hostile."

Jan breathed deeply. In the relaxing glow of the pain-killer he felt he could stand no more happiness.

But he could. Virginia was waiting at the house. It was partly the drug, but this time he felt relaxed near her—even inside a sudden embrace that ignored the blood on his shirt and the pain in his arm. On the moonlit veranda, after the others had hurried into the house, he stroked her hair with his good hand.

That night his thoughts moved for a while from Virginia. To make up for this he'd lead Barton to the finest trophies in Africa—that old kudu patriarch near Kibaya, a big sable bull farther south, and—if Barton wanted—they'd go west for a try at the Crown Prince, a giant tusker who had so far outsmarted three generations of hunters.

And he'd try to be a worthy understudy to Jim Wyett, listening to his camp-fire stories, learning about the Kenya forests where Jim was an expert on *bongo* and giant forest hog. In a few years the old hunter would have to face retirement; maybe he could make this easier. THE END

STRANGE TALES OF THE SEA • 16

by Commander Douglas Duff

The Queen Mary cut a warship in half

SHORTLY after 2 p.m. on October 2, 1942, off the north coast of Ireland, what is perhaps the strangest collision in all the long history of ships killed more than three hundred seamen.

At eight that morning H.M.S. Curaçoa, an anti-aircraft cruiser of 4,290 tons, made her rendezvous with the mighty 81,000-ton Cunarder Queen Mary, bound for Gourock on the Clyde from America.

U-boats and German aircraft were busy in the Western Approaches and the great liner had to be protected at all costs.

The Curaçoa could not steam quite as fast as the Queen Mary—she was nearly a knot slower than the huge three-funnelled merchantman.

Consequently it was decided that she should not steer the same zig-zag course needed to deter lurking submarines. Instead, she would keep a straight course, keeping as close to the giant liner as she could.

That would compensate for the cruiser's slower speed and allow the general rate of advance to be maintained.

At two o'clock the liner was swinging on the next leg of her zig-zag.

Shortly afterwards the collision occurred. The vast, knife-edged stem of the 81,000-tonner, amid a screaming of tortured, riven steel, struck the Curacoa amidships.

Like a great ploughshare it slashed through the three inches of armour plate on the cruiser's broadside—sliced right across her width, then, severing the armour plate on the far side, threw the forward half of the Curaçoa to port, her after-part to starboard and steamed right through the escort's middle.

Here came the miracle—the liner was almost unscathed. With all the terrible force of her weight and great speed she had flung the wreck so far clear that her own bows were only slightly damaged. Not only did she stay afloat but she kept a speed of twenty-four knots all the way to the Clyde.

Nothing like it has ever been known before.

It is almost unbelievable that any ship could survive such a shock, for it was not an ordinary merchantman that the liner slashed in two, but a warship with armoured sides.

The men of Clydebank who made the Queen Mary were craftsmen who proved that British shipbuilding is second to none.

Of the Curaçoa's crew of over four hundred, 338 went down with her.

The maiden and the mayor

Continued from page 21

he had one foot on the lower town hall steps.

"Gino! Gino!"

There was only one person in the world with so melodious a voice. Gino turned. It was Francesca.

She was running towards him, carrying something under her arm. She darted through the traffic with the lightness of a ballerina.

"Gino, *amante*," she said a little breathlessly when she reached his side. "I'm so glad I caught you before you went into the town hall."

Francesca did not give Gino time to utter a word. Swiftly, she snatched the sail-cloth-covered canvas from him, pushed another into his arms, and was away with the swiftness of the wind.

There was a split second of utter stupefaction as Gino stared with wild, amazed eyes after her flying figure. Then he came to life.

"Stop! Stop! Stop!" he bawled frantically, and gave chase.

But Francesca had vanished. Gino stood in the middle of the street, panting, till three resonant chimes from the clock behind him made him turn and hurry back to the town hall steps. Pausing there, he looked for the first time at what Francesca had left with him. Beneath its covering was one of his paintings tacked to a frame about eighteen inches square. Surely, he thought in amazement, Francesca did not expect him to show this to the committee?

It was the painting of a blue and black craft called the Vincere, anchored in shimmering blue Mediterranean waters—one of his earliest efforts, promising but amateurish.

Gino sighed deeply and shook his head in bewilderment. Slowly he climbed the steps. At the top he came to the small, musty room which served as the ante-room of the civic hall.

An old caretaker hovered near the door. "I'll tell you when you can go in," he said, and indicated a bench.

Gino sat down feeling dispirited, and put the canvas beside him. He wasn't taking that in with him.

He frowned heavily. Whatever had possessed Francesca to behave so stupidly? He remembered the day that she had first spotted that particular picture among the rest of his canvases. She had stood with it a long time, staring at it and smiling secretly. She had never told him why it merited her special attention.

He recollected the day that he had painted it. Looking for fresh scenes away from San Stephano, he had wandered a long way, losing his bearings and finding himself walking along a stretch of coast of uninhabited desolation—nothing but rocks and scrub. There had seemed little fresh inspiration there, but then he had gone right to the cliff's edge and had seen the boat nestling in a little rocky cove. He had balanced his easel precariously on the cliff's edge.

Now he sat twisting his hands and thought of what he would say when he faced the committee. He would beg very humbly and apologetically for an interview at another time. He would say that, due to strange and peculiar circumstances, he could not give them an idea of the form his mural work would take.

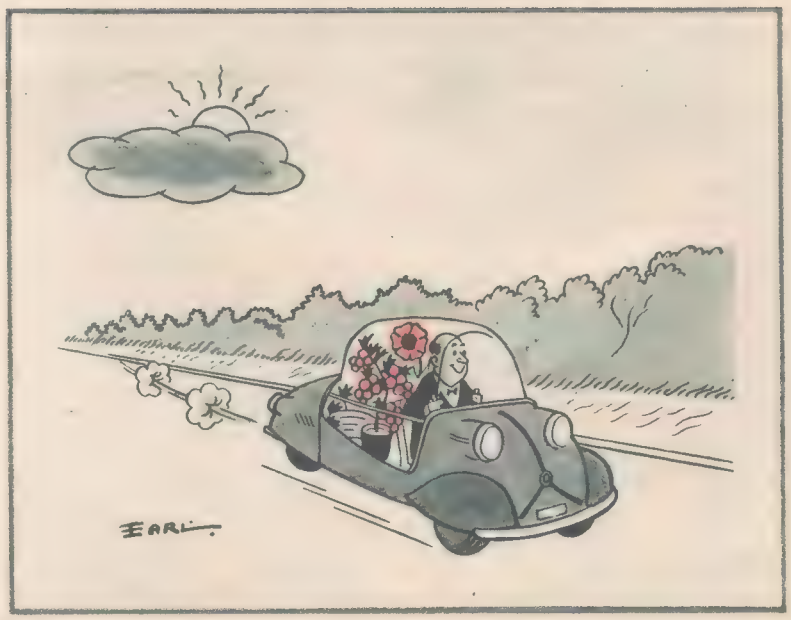
A bell rang. "You can go in now," said the caretaker.

Gino took a deep breath and walked through the door.

"You've forgotten this," said the old caretaker, catching his arm and handing him the offending canvas.

Gino took it miserably and held it behind his back as he walked towards the mahogany desk in the centre of the room. He gulped as four pairs of eyes regarded him steadily. For a fleeting minute he had the feeling that already they had decided not to give him the commission but must go through the empty formality of interviewing him.

In front of him, behind the shining mahogany desk, sat Bernato, the mayor, portly and dignified; Lorenzo Giacinto, Francesca's father, with his venerable, stern, patriarchal exterior



brightened by a gay white carnation; and the town clerk, a thin, wiry little man wearing a high white collar and smelling faintly of camphor. The fourth was Luca Rapello, who gave Gino a comradely wink. At one time, Luca had been the king-spiv of the Vittoria, but apparently he now moved in more respectable circles.

The mayor smiled a welcome. "Gino Frascalli?" he inquired.

Gino nodded nervously.

"The design. We would like to see it," said the mayor.

Gino stared, inarticulate.

"But we can't see it when it's behind your back," said the mayor impatiently.

Dumb with despair, Gino slowly brought the canvas to their view. "But this is not my——" he began.

He was stopped by the amazing effect the picture had on the group in front of him. They stared at it, mesmerized, for a full half-minute. Then slowly they exchanged glances, like four desperadoes caught red-handed. The town clerk raised his

MEN AND WOMEN—2

A man is as good as he has to be, and a woman as bad as she dares.

Elbert Hubbard

brows and looked up to heaven. Francesca's father fingered his carnation. The mayor looked deflated.

Only Luca Rapello retained his ease of manner. With an expression of pure delight, he got up from the mayoral desk, came round to where the bewildered Gino stood and clapped him heartily on the back.

"Excellent, my good Gino!" he chuckled. "An excellent move. Your brains do you credit. I did not think before that you had it in you."

Gino looked past Luca to where the mayor was gathering his wits in order to address him.

"I suggest a fee of fifty thousand lire now, Frascalli," the mayor said. "And another fifty when the murals are finished."

"You mean that I have got the commission?" Gino asked, gazing at the committee in astonishment.

"But of course," the town clerk said thinly. "Isn't that what you expected?"

"Well?" The mayor smiled ingratiatingly. "What do you say to the fee of a hundred thousand lire?"

"I feel five hundred thousand would be a more worthy sum," said Luca, with a wink at Gino and a look of bland, sly arrogance in the mayor's direction. Luca appeared to be rallying at Gino's side with the comradeship of a fellow spirit.

Gino clasped the picture nervously in his hands and stared at the committee. He had not expected more than a hundred thousand lire even if he got the commission, for that was an unknown artist's fee. Five hundred thousand was a professional's price.

"Five hundred thousand it is then, eh?" said the mayor in resigned tones, looking round at the rest of the committee.

"I feel that one hundred thousand is sufficient for an unknown though no doubt excellent artist," said Lorenzo Giacinto. He had been staring indignantly at Gino ever since the painting had come on view. "Anyway, you didn't make a very good job of the Vincere," he snapped.

"One hundred thousand is not enough for an aspiring artist who is shortly to marry the daughter of our town's illustrious deputy mayor," Luca Rapello said smoothly.

Gino shot him a warning, imploring glance. But it was too late. The thing had been said—and Lorenzo had taken its meaning.

"My daughter?" he snapped. "What do you know about my daughter, Frascalli? How should she know such a person as you, let alone wish to marry you? You—a dishwasher at a third-rate hotel! This is madness."

"In these cases," Luca said softly, gazing innocently at the ceiling, "it is always the parents who are the last to know."

Lorenzo looked from Luca to Gino, his face slowly assuming a livid hue. Then he sprang to life.

"So! You have dragged my Francesca, my only child, my beloved daughter, into this seedy plan of yours. You—you good-for-nothing scoundrel! You rogue! You imbecile!"

Under the onslaught, Gino quivered but tried to hold his ground. "We love each other," he said.

Lorenzo stormed round the desk and was only stopped from committing physical assault by the mayor, who caught him by the collar. The two dignitaries clung together in the most undignified manner.

"Now, now, Lorenzo," the mayor said. "Calm yourself." He gave Lorenzo a hefty nudge in the ribs. "It is better, much better," he hissed, "for him to be in the family."

"Yes . . . yes . . . I suppose so," said Lorenzo weakly, calming down like a dying hurricane.

"Well, well, then," said Luca Rapello gaily, "shake hands with your future son-in-law, Lorenzo."

"This calls for a celebration," said the mayor grandly. "Get out the glasses."

"What will you have, Gino, my friend?" Luca asked blithely as he brought bottles from the other side of the desk with a flourish. "As you see," he added in a grand, sweeping manner, "all the very best is to hand. A Vicomte D'Orthez," he suggested, indicating the champagne. "Or perhaps a Tio Pepe . . . ?"

Gino left an hour or two later, his dazed condition not entirely due to the nectar he had drunk. He got to the Via Vittoria and stood in the doorway of Apollonio's café and looked in. Most of the inhabitants of the Vittoria seemed to be there—and so was Francesca. They all appeared to be celebrating with wine and music.

"Come on Gino, we're celebrating your success," they called to him.

"Francesca came to tell us an hour ago to get ready for the party—that you got the commission," beamed Apollonio, handing Gino a glass. "Though, indeed, didn't we know it anyway? Always we say you are the best painter in Italy."

Gino took the glass from Apollonio and threaded his way through the happy patrons of the Vittoria, who always loved the chance of a celebration. He reached the table where Francesca sat demurely.

"Why did you give me that atrocious painting of the Vincere?" he demanded. "You knew it would get me the commission. Why?"

FRANCESCA looked up at the unfamiliar, stern Gino, and bubbled with laughter. She lifted her arms and gave her dazed Romeo a congratulatory kiss.

"So, Gino *amante*. Are you not glad I get for you the commission?" she said, laughing.

"But—that painting!" Gino protested.

"The painting of the Vincere? Francesca said. "What did papa think of it? Does he not think it does justice to his beautiful boat?"

"The Vincere belongs to your father?" Gino inquired stupidly.

Francesca nodded, laughing. "And to Bernato, and Luca, and the town clerk," she said in a conspiratorial whisper. "They also have an interest in running it."

Still Gino did not understand.

"Most of Bernato's wines and spirits come from France and Spain. But, you understand, the duty on them is rarely paid," Francesca explained. She gave way to another ripe burst of laughter. "And they think you discovered their secret. They think you threaten them with exposure. For years the cove is the perfect spot to land a cargo. The cliff top, it is in a deserted part where no one goes, and it is very precarious to see down to the cove anyway. From the sea also it is invisible. And ah, my precious Gino, you, with your paints and easel, have to discover it."

Gino looked back on the committee in the town hall and saw them in a new light. Smugglers! Now he remembered all the labels on the bottles that Luca had produced from the cupboard with such a flourish. . . . The honeyed nectar, the quintescence of all the vineyards of Europe.

Francesca, reading Gino's mind, challenged his thoughts before he voiced them.

"No, Gino," she said firmly and sweetly, "you will not see Inspector Paccaile of the carabinieri. For one thing he would be a friend of yours no longer if you give the impression to the higher authorities that he does not keep his eyes open. For the same reason you must not jeopardize your friendship with the harbour-master. And also, Gino, you cannot get your future father-in-law into trouble."

"But one thing I can do," said Gino morosely. "I shall refuse the commission. I have no right to accept it."

"And that you will not do." Francesca said forcibly. "Who else has the right to the commission but you? You are the best artist. Also, remember you will soon have a wife—and perhaps a family—to support."

She put her soft arms around Gino's neck and kissed him. Gino hesitated and then was lost.

He took a last desperate gulp at the Apollonio "special" he held in his hand, and shook his head. The events and the shocks of the day, combined with ardour of the fiery goddess of wine, and the even greater ardour of Francesca, had proved altogether too much for him.

"I don't know. It is all so confusing. I cannot think," he said.

"Don't try to," Francesca reassured him. "Gino, *amante*, a married couple must share out their duties. You paint. I will do the thinking. Is that not an excellent arrangement?" THE END

Take a handful of barleycorns

THE farmer looks critically at the barleycorns in his hand, because he hopes this crop will go to the Whitbread's maltings where only the best is wanted.

Nothing is too much trouble, either on the farm or in the maltings, to make sure the barleys will yield the richest of malt for Whitbread's brews.

They don't call it trouble at Whitbread's—only care and thoroughness.

It is still true that, if you make a product supremely well, and never let up on the carefulness that keeps the workers proud of their work, the public will find it out and come back for more.

When you drink to the health of your friends over a glass poured from a Whitbread bottle or a pint of Whitbread draught beer, you are reaping the benefit of all the care that the farmer puts into his land, and every man jack of them at Whitbread's puts into his day's work.

WHITBREAD brewers of some very distinguished beers

WHITBREAD Pale Ale, for example, with that superb flavour—which explains why this beer is to be found in the homes of the knowledgeable in all walks of life.

The Golden Lantern

Continued from page 15

put my foot against it. "Talking about Chalmers isn't my idea of a pleasant afternoon either," I said. "Did he come here yesterday? If he didn't, I'm wasting your time."

"Of course he came here," Barnwell bawled. "I've just spent an hour telling the police about that."

I took it as an admission, and walked past him. With a growl he shut the door after me and followed me on to the covered veranda. "Well, you've managed to get inside. Now let's have it. What's all this damned fancywork about?"

"I'm hoping to find that out from you," I told him. "I'd heard nothing of Chalmers for more than six years till I had a letter yesterday morning asking for my help. He came here yesterday and left, apparently, in time to keep an appointment in Melhaven with me. But he didn't. He went back to his boat and died."

Barnwell lit a pipe, an enormous hooked briar. Everything about him seemed big. He said: "Why the devil should he send for you?"

"Presumably because he wanted me to act for him in some way he couldn't expect of his own lawyers."

"You're a lawyer, eh? That explains a lot," Barnwell said. He thrust his jaw out at me. "Who knows about this?"

"Vanessa Chalmers, Joel Reardon and Ross Malin. I told Vanessa and she told the others without consulting me."

He didn't comment on that. He sat staring through the glass walls of his eyrie as if he were watching for a foreign armada.

"Why did he come to you yesterday?" I asked.

"Chalmers was treasurer of the Royal Melhaven and I'm secretary," Barnwell said. "I'd knowledge of certain illegal activities he'd been engaged in and I threatened to inform the authorities."

"You mean that as treasurer he'd been fiddling. . . ."

He gave a rumbling laugh. "That would have been chicken-feed. He came to see me yesterday at my invitation. When he came through that door he was a man at the end of his rope. But he begged for twenty-four hours' grace. Said he'd come again probably with a legal friend, and tell me something that'd shake me. Said there might be no prosecution in spite of everything I knew." He gave me a shrewd glance. "The legal friend being you, I suppose?"

I nodded.

"He told me I wasn't the only one who'd got wind of what he'd been up to," Barnwell went on. "He seemed more worried about their knowledge than mine."

"Did he say who they were?"

"He didn't, but I could make four guesses and three of them would be right."

I thought it over, while Barnwell smoked and watched me. For some reason I trusted him. He was the sort of man who hasn't the mental build for bluff and duplicity.

I said cautiously: "It should be obvious to you now that Chalmers was going to take me into his confidence and empower me to act for him. I think you ought to tell me frankly what there is to know."

Barnwell hesitated. Then he shrugged his massive shoulders. He said: "For two years your pal Chalmers has been running one of the most profitable smuggling rackets ever."

I hid my surprise. "Smuggling what?"

"Metals. Mostly copper. Chalmers was director of two or three biggish concerns—you probably know that. He could get hold of the stuff."

"But what could I have done for him?" I said. "It isn't a thing he could have hushed up."

"In my opinion he wanted you to avoid the charge, not to defend him when it had been made. That's the way I see it."

"Who was in this thing with him?"

"Wouldn't care to say, though I've got my suspicions. I don't think, though, that he depended on anybody but himself for the actual job."

"Then why was he killed?" I said. "If he was in a position to get hold of the stuff, why remove him?"

"You can't expect me to tell you that."

"I don't. I'm asking myself more than you. I've an idea there's something still bigger involved. You wouldn't have thought anyone but Chalmers and myself knew I was coming, but there must have been a leakage. I was watched, reported on and attacked."

"What?" He stared at me, his great jowl hanging down.

"Somebody tried to knock me over with a car last night."

"You've told the police?"

"Not yet."

"Might be as well if you did. They say the criminal mind runs in grooves. A gal called Peterson nearly got her chips the same way five or six weeks back."

I had a sudden vision of Elva Peterson smashed and torn under a car. . . . It was so vivid, so nauseating that I didn't think of asking for details.

I wondered whether to ask if he knew anything about her brother, or why Warren Chalmers had given evidence at his trial, but caution warned me not to go as far as that—caution, and a reluctance to hear anything that might strengthen the crazy motive Elva had, according to Reardon, for killing Chalmers.

"What time did Chalmers leave here yesterday?" I asked.

"Roughly half-past six."

"How does that fit in with the time he got to Melhaven?"

The Commander didn't reply for a moment. Then he said: "Going on what the police say, I'd have expected him to get there earlier. He'd make about fourteen knots. Mind, it's only a matter of minutes."

There seemed nothing else to be gleaned. I got up, thanked Barnwell for his help, and asked what line he intended taking now about the smuggling business.

"That's giving me a headache. Provided the racket dies with Chalmers, I'd rather keep it quiet. If it came out there'd be a stink that wouldn't do Vanessa Chalmers any good if she's going to stay in the district."

"But if it ties up with his death?"

"Then I'll have no choice."

I left the Commander to his veranda and drove back fast, thinking over what I had been told. A lot seemed to have happened that day. Since leaving Chanter's Wharf I'd avoided Elva Peterson. Now I wanted to talk to her.

I left my car parked by the Dolphin and went down to the quay. Swallow wasn't there. I resented that. She ought to be there. At a loose end, I went through Brandy Staithe to the main street. It never occurred to me that I would find Elva there. I imagined her in Swallow, somewhere down the estuary beyond my reach. But I saw her through the steamy window of a snack-bar. She was still wearing slacks and sweater, the duffel coat over her shoulders.

I went in and stood behind her. "You shouldn't do things like this," I said to the back of her neck, noticing the short golden hair on her honey-brown skin. "I thought something must have happened to you."

"Do I have to report every move to you?" she said over her shoulder.

I sat down and asked for some tea. Her hand moved across the counter towards mine.

"I didn't mean that, Mark."

"You don't have to apologize. I'm getting to know you better now. It's a reflex action you have."

"Reflex?"

"Try to pat an ill-treated dog and it cringes."

"Has somebody ill-treated me?"

"Pretty badly, I think."

"Could be." She smiled. "Anyway, there's nothing to report. I took Swallow to a creek farther upstream, that's all. I was going to let you know." She shivered. "I don't fancy sleeping in her so near the quay. When I go aboard, I shall take her well out."

"You haven't always lived in a boat at Melhaven?" I said.

"Only the last few months."

"And before then?"

"Mostly in London. I'd a flat. At least, I shared the expenses with my brother, but he wasn't often with me. I'd a part-time job, too, in a travel agency. I liked that."

"Why did you give it up and come here?"

"My mother left me some money, just enough to live on if I don't eat a lot. So when it seemed Geoff wouldn't be using the flat for a while, I left it. Do you want to go?"

We went into the street and I tucked her arm under mine. She took me along a narrow passage at the back of the church. We came out at the creek she had mentioned, and there was Swallow. The sun had set beyond the estuary and the little town was calm and still under high purple clouds.

We got aboard and she took the boat out to a deep pool in the elbow of the river, not far from Flirtation. We went into the cabin.

"What have you been doing since I saw you last?" she asked.

"This afternoon I went to The Golden Lantern," I said. "I saw Vanessa—and I mishandled things just about as badly as I could have done. For one thing, I was fool enough to tell them you'd provided me with an alibi. I was told it could be as much an alibi for you as for me."

"Did Vanessa say that?"

"No, she pulled Reardon and Malin into the party. It was Reardon who said it. He told me about your brother."

"Yes?" She sat very still, looking at me with eyes expressionless for once. "I'd better tell you about Geoff, hadn't I?"

She sat beside me on the bunk. "Geoff was at Cambridge, then in the air force, and then at Abercefn. Does that ring any bells?"

It didn't—not a complete chime. But I was startled. I knew that most of the activity in this country connected with guided missiles was centred around Abercefn.

"The things he was doing at Abercefn were top secret." Elva went on.

"Even the office cleaners' jobs at those places are top secret," I said.

ELVA didn't seem to hear me. She said: "Geoff loved boats and everything to do with the sea. We used to come here a lot. We'd marvellous times together. That's how we met Warren Chalmers and Vanessa, and Ross Malin, too, though we never realized how friendly the Malins were with them. They acted like ordinary visitors."

"Where was Reardon?"

"He was around. They had another friend, a man called Delmarr. He said he was a professor of oriental languages in London. We didn't attach any importance to these people, you understand. They were staying at the hotel, we met them, had a few drinks, and that was all. Or it was until the night Geoff told me what had been happening."

She turned her face towards me. "Mark, it isn't easy to talk like this about my brother. I loved him and I still do, but I'd no illusions about him. When he was in the R.A.F., something rather shocking happened. He was young and foolish and—well, he paid for it.

"He met a girl last winter and they were getting engaged. He'd a long talk with me and asked if he should tell her about what had happened. I said no, and I'll always blame myself for influencing him. He drove back from Abercefn one night and knocked me up at the flat. This man Delmarr had found out about him and was blackmailing him. Not for money—that was the worst part of it. All he asked for was certain information which Geoff was in a position to get him."

"Was he fool enough to try?"

She bowed her head. "Yes—and bungled it. He knew he was going to be arrested and he wanted to run away, but I made him stay till the police came."

"I don't remember reading anything about it," I said.

"Geoff wasn't terribly important," she said bitterly. "And Delmarr wasn't what we'd thought. He was London correspondent for a Paris journal, well known for what the prosecution called his left-wing sympathies."

"What line did Warren and Vanessa Chalmers take?"

"What do you expect? They said they'd known Delmarr a long time and always accepted him for what he seemed to be; that they were horrified to think he'd abused their friendship. It was all rather fiendish, the way they gave their evidence so reluctantly. Every word had to be dragged out of them—and every word meant another day on Geoff's sentence."

"They?" I didn't want to ask the question, but I had to. "Did Vanessa give evidence, too?"

"Yes." Elva stared out at the river. Then she said abruptly: "Have you ever heard of Norman Hurwood?"

I shook my head.

"He was Geoff's senior for a year before all this happened. I knew him, and his wife. They have three children. Margaret's sweet. You'd like her. You'd like Norman, too."

"And the children, probably," I said. "But where do they come in?"

"I saw Norman Hurwood here, in

MEN AND WOMEN—3

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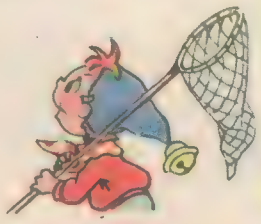

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Melhaven last Monday. He was with Warren Chalmers."

"You're absolutely certain of that? Where?"

"Chalmers was rowing him towards Church Creek in Flirtation's dinghy. I've been watching Flirtation for weeks. I never expected to see Hurwood, but I thought Delmarr might come back. I thought I might get something on Warren and Vanessa. I wanted to do that."

"Hurwood might have been here on quite legitimate business."

"Then why didn't Margaret say so?"

"Didn't she? You've been in touch with her?"

"I rang her up the same night. I said I wanted to talk to Mr. Hurwood, that I wanted to ask him something about Geoff. She said that Norman was in Edinburgh and that he wouldn't be back for several days. And, Mark, she wasn't lying. I'm sure she thought Norman really was in Edinburgh."

"Made any other inquiries?"

"No, I've just been watching and waiting."

THERE was one other obvious question. "If it was Hurwood you saw, where is he now?"

"At The Golden Lantern—or on board Reardon's yacht."

"It didn't take you long to work that out."

"I know the Hurwoods. Norman Hurwood was a bomber pilot during the war—a squadron leader. He never talks about it now. He hates war and everything to do with war. He hated himself for being at Abercefn."

"And of such," I said, more to myself than the girl, "fellow-travellers are made."

"Yes. He was there with Warren Chalmers willingly."

"We call them traitors or idealists," I said, "according to our own ideals. Why didn't you tell Watkins about it?"

"Why didn't you tell Watkins about finding Warren dead on his boat?" she parried. "Do you think they'd ever find Hurwood?"

"Why not, if he's there? The Golden Lantern's a country pub, not a fortress."

"You're forgetting Ross Malin."

She was right there.

"If the police found Hurwood there, it would be the end of their racket," Elva said. "They wouldn't risk that."

I looked at her curiously. "What racket are you talking about?"

"Do you think Geoff was an isolated victim? Somewhere there are files full of nasty little episodes from the lives of all sorts of people. Somewhere there's a network of informers. That's what Millworth said. He said——"

"Millworth?" I said.

"He's a feature-writer on the *Gazette*. He was at Geoff's trial. He said Geoff didn't matter a bit. No one man knew the secrets of even one little process. But if you could piece together a dozen scraps of useless information, they added up to something. Millworth recognized Malin, too. He said Malin's one of the most dangerous men alive today."

"But Malin wasn't mixed up in your brother's trial?"

"No, but he was always at Chanter's Wharf. And he came to the trial every day. Millworth recognized him in the public gallery.

"*That's* why I didn't tell the police," Elva said. "One false move and Norman Hurwood never goes back to Margaret again. I just *know* that."

"What's the alternative? He won't go back to her, anyway, if he thinks Siberia's the New Jerusalem."

"He'd be *alive* . . . and I don't think they've got him away yet. While Reardon's at The Golden Lantern, his boat won't go. They can't wait too long, but I think we've a day or two—perhaps several days. Warren Chalmers's being killed has made all the difference. If Reardon went off in a hurry, he wouldn't get very far." Suddenly she turned to me. "Now, will you tell me everything *you* know?"

I told her what little I knew, ending with an account of my visit to Languish Island.

"So Chalmers had been smuggling

"Darling—do you remember how we laughed at your uncle's joke about burnt offerings at our wedding?"

copper," she said thoughtfully when I finished. "I wonder how much Ollett knows about that?"

"Should he know anything?"

"I think he must. We'll go and see him. We'll go now."

"Steady on," I said. "I haven't eaten for years—or it feels like years. And I think I'd like a word with this chap Millworth, too."

She grinned. "All right, I'll go into the quay and you can phone him while I toil over the stove."

There was a telephone box almost on the corner of Brandy Staithe. I got through to the *Gazette* and asked to speak to Millworth. A squeaky voice at the other end said that he wasn't there and asked me to hold on; there was some muttering in the background and then the voice told me to try Paddington 6681.

I had to leave the box then to get some more change. I could see Swallow with smoke rising from her galley.

I doubled back to the telephone box and rang the Paddington number. It was a long time before I heard the receiver lifted; a sleepy voice said: "Spencer Millworth."

"My name's Cradford," I said. "That won't tell you anything but I'm ringing from a place called Melhaven—I've been talking to Elva Peterson."

"How interesting, Mr. Cradford, but I hope you didn't wake me to tell me that?" His voice had developed an edge. "I'm leaving for Austria this evening and before then I need all the sleep I can get."

"I've more to tell you than that," I assured him. "An—an old friend of mine called Chalmers has just been murdered. There's a man on the spot called Malin. We thought you might know something about him."

"What do you want to know?"

"Well—who is he?"

"They didn't call him Malin when I first knew him," Millworth said. "He was known as Norton then. The last time I saw him before the Peterson case he was haring into the eastern sector of Berlin with the Yanks after him. I wish to God they'd got him."

"I believe you told Elva he was dangerous?"

"The most dangerous reptile outside a zoo," he said. "Listen. There was a scientist called Schreibe. It took us six months to get him on the way to England from the other side of the Curtain. We didn't get him far enough. We put him in hospital—an American hospital. Norton passed himself as a hospital orderly. The East got him back. He'll be dead now."

"So that's Malin's trade?" I asked.

"I could give you the names of fifty people he's kidnapped and sold over the river."

"It's as well to know what we're up against," I said.

"You're up against a political fanatic, a ruthless, smiling killer."

I didn't dispute it. Two days ago I might have done. It smacked too much of melodrama to go easily with the sort of life I'd been living. But since then I'd seen Malin. I'd been afraid of Malin. And the whole international scene was melodramatic enough in all conscience.

"If you knew all this," I said, "why didn't you do something when Elva Peterson told you he was one of the crowd her brother had been mixed up with?"

"I did. I told the top brass that Norton of Berlin was now Malin of London and Melhaven. They made inquiries and called me a liar. Malin's papers were in order. He was a Canadian domiciled in the States and here with a U.S. passport. They'd nothing on him. His business was legitimate and his background authentic. So I gave up."

"You could have been mistaken, I suppose?"

HE said: "I could enter Thailand next week with papers proving I was an Irish-Greek domiciled in Switzerland and living on a rubber plantation in Brazil, and I'm an amateur at the game compared with Norton. . . . Anything else I can do for you?"

"No, it seems as if we're on our own," I said. "But the information about Malin might come in useful."

Millworth grunted. "Be careful. Don't argue with him unless you've put a bullet through him first."

"That seems sound advice," I said. I thanked him for his help and put the receiver down. By the time I got back to Swallow Elva had a meal on the table. I ate greedily.

"How does it link up?" I asked her. "Hurwood here—unless we're right off the beam—Warren Chalmers sending for me, then the murder."

"I wonder if Warren Chalmers was being blackmailed over his smuggling racket?" Elva said.

"Knowing his character, I'd say the boot was on the other foot."

She shook her head impatiently. "When my brother was blackmailed, what was the price? Not money. It was committing another crime. Couldn't it have been that way with Warren?"

"I've had a hard day," I said. "I don't quite follow."

"Warren had been breaking the law—perhaps for years. He was a far better prospect for blackmail than ever Geoff was."

"There's a slight difference," I pointed out. "Chalmers hadn't any official secrets to give away."

"No. Just a fast boat and a hundred per cent safe way of smuggling things across the Channel."

I stared at her. "What are you getting at?"

"Flirtation could cross the Channel with Hurwood on board and be back again in a few hours. Suppose that was the blackmail price? Chalmers daren't or wouldn't go through with it, so he wrote to you for help."

"Why?" I asked bluntly.

"The game was up. Commander Barnwell knew what he'd been doing. So did Reardon and Malin, and perhaps his wife, too. He'd still got all the money he'd made and he wanted to enjoy it. So he wanted you to do a deal with the authorities. He'd tell them about Norman Hurwood—and perhaps a lot more besides—if they'd turn a blind eye to what he'd been doing."

I carried my empty plate into the galley. "Let's go and see Ollett," I said.

It was a warm, still evening as we set out for Ollett's digs. He lived on the other side of town. With Elva beside me, it should have been a pleasant stroll. But it was a day full of surprises. Our way led past The Golden Lantern and just before we got there Elva tugged suddenly at my arm.

"Look, Mark, there he is."

She was pointing at a shabby little car just drawing away from the hotel. I caught a glimpse of Ollett at the wheel as it went by, heading towards the mainland road.

"Now where——" I began.

"Get the car and let's find out."

We ran towards the Dolphin. I don't suppose it took us more than three minutes to get there—but three minutes' start was a long time even in a car as old as Ollett's. We went all out for several miles before we saw it moving along the valley road a long way ahead.

When it turned left at the bridge, Elva remarked in a too-casual voice: "Well, didn't we both expect it? He's going to Languish Island."

It was true. Languish Island was Ollett's obvious destination. The road led nowhere else. What could Ollett want with Commander Barnwell?

But Ollett wasn't going to see the Commander. A mile short of the spreading white house, he drove his car off the road and parked it among the undergrowth. I thought he must see us, but evidently he was not expecting pursuit and never even glanced over his shoulder. He began walking briskly towards the low-lying headland, and we cautiously followed.

He never once turned round. He appeared to be making a wide detour that would take him to the decrepit landing-stage where the Commander's boat was tied up.

We came to a hollow among the dunes and I drew Elva behind a clump of grass. "There's no point in following him any farther," I said. "We can see everything there is to see from here. He can't be going anywhere but the landing-stage, and there isn't anything there but the boat."

We could just see Ollett as he went down the steps from the broken concrete ramp to the landing-stage.

What happened next was so sudden, so unexpected that neither of us moved or spoke till it was too late. Not five yards from where Ollett was standing, a figure appeared to rise from the ground and spring towards him. An arm lifted and smashed down. Ollett pitched forward and the figure bent

over him, striking again and again. It was all over in a few seconds. Before we could react in any constructive way, Ollett's attacker had already disappeared among the dunes.

We started to run then—at least Elva started to run. I limped after her as quickly as I could, cursing the shell-splinter in my leg. When I reached her she was trying to pull Ollett clear of a pool of water.

"Barnwell will be on the phone," she said. "I'll get a doctor."

"A doctor isn't any use," I said.

I made her turn away. She buried her face against my jacket, shaking with hysterical sobs.

It was all but dark now, dark and bitterly cold, with that wet mist flowing in from the sea. Elva was shivering. I pulled up the hood of her coat.

Then I heard a movement close behind me, and turned sharply. Commander Barnwell was standing on the wooden staging, looking down at us. He didn't speak, but walked slowly to where Ollett lay on the sand.

"If you want to know what happened——" I began.

"I don't," he said curtly. "You can tell that to the police. I'll get them on the phone and you can wait at the house till they come."

It seemed all wrong, leaving Ollett alone there on the sand. But nothing more could be done for him. The telephone was on the veranda. Barnwell asked for Melhaven police station, told them there was a dead man on his stretch of foreshore, and quite unnecessarily asked them to send someone out.

"It'll be Watkins," he told me, putting down the phone. "We're old friends."

Elva sat down in a wicker chair, while Barnwell walked to the other side of the veranda and poured himself a drink. Nobody said anything. Elva and I sat there looking at the blank windows, with the silent Commander behind us, till the police car came.

The Commander let them in. When Inspector Watkins came through the door he stopped dead and stared. I've never seen a more surprised policeman.

Barnwell said: "It's Ollett. Chalmers's one-time jack-of-all-trades."

"Ollett? Good God! But——"

"You'll find him on the beach below the landing-stage."

"And what are these people doing here? Guests of yours, Jim?"

"I suggest you take a look at Ollett first, then ask them."

There were two men with Watkins—a sergeant and a constable. At a sign from the inspector the constable ambled into the room and stood between us and the door as if he expected us to make a bolt for it. At another sign the sergeant hurried out with Watkins.

I don't remember a longer twenty minutes. When they came back, our guard was told off to go down to the beach and stay there till relieved. Then Watkins went to the telephone.

He put down the receiver after asking for an ambulance and a Dr. Craig. For a quarter of a minute he looked at Elva and me, his deep-set eyes swivelling from one of us to the other.

"Well?" he said. "I'm waiting."

I put down my pipe and spoke very carefully. I said: "This afternoon, Miss Peterson and I wanted to see Ollett. We saw him coming in this direction and followed him, assuming that he was going to call on Commander Barnwell. Instead of that, he went to the beach."

I described the murder as we had seen it, and our subsequent actions. The inspector nodded and turned to Elva. He said curtly: "Have you anything to add to Mr. Cradford's account?"

"Nothing," she said.

"You were together all the time?"

"All the time."

Watkins sat down. He seemed to be thinking over what he had been told. Then he looked at me and said: "How did this man attack Ollett?"

"He struck him from behind with a lump of stone or concrete. Then he struck him again as he lay at the water's edge." Feeling impatient, I added, because Ollett's murderer was probably getting farther away every minute: "Or perhaps you're not interested in that, Inspector?"

"I'm very interested, Mr. Cradford. But there are more ways of catching a man than groping for him in the mist. For one thing, I think the time has come for you to be more frank with us. What brought you to Melhaven?"

I'd been expecting that, and I'd already decided that there was nothing to be gained by further subterfuge. I told him about Chalmers's letter.

"What was his trouble?" Watkins asked.

"He didn't tell me."

The Commander was shifting uneasily in his chair. He rumbled something in his throat and Inspector Watkins looked at him politely.

"Chalmers didn't tell Cradford," Barnwell said, "but I did. I know what Chalmers wanted, or I'm ninety-eight per cent sure of it. Chalmers was up to his neck and over in a smuggling racket that's been going on right under your noses for years."

Hands deep in his pockets, he began to repeat the story he had told me. I could see the inspector's concern growing every moment.

"Why didn't you tell me what was happening?"

"My dear feller, Chalmers and I were both club officials. I gave him a month to wind up his tricks and resign his membership. That'd have satisfied me."

Watkins turned to me. "So your story of coming here to see Miss Peterson was sheer invention?"

"It was my invention," Elva told him. "Don't blame Mr. Cradford for that. I could see the way your mind was working."

The inspector gave her a look of almost fatherly reproof. He said: "You know, Miss Peterson, you should never have hung around Melhaven the way you have. Your brother wouldn't approve of it. You've mixed yourself up with this unfortunate man Ollett, and look what's happened to him."

"Ollett didn't die because he was mixed up with me," Elva flashed back. "He died because he'd worked for Chalmers and knew something."

"About what, Miss Peterson? Or whom?"

"Reardon and Malin."

The inspector grunted. "That's an obsession with you, Miss Peterson," he said. "I can understand it and make allowances for it up to a point."

Seeing the mutinous expression on Elva's face, I thought we were due for a flare-up. "Inspector," I said, "what do you *know* about these two men, Reardon and Malin?"

His hesitation lasted only a moment. "Reardon," he said, "is an international figure——"

"Oh lord!" groaned Barnwell. "That phrase again."

"As for Malin, he came to England some years ago after a long period abroad——"

"Was his career investigated before

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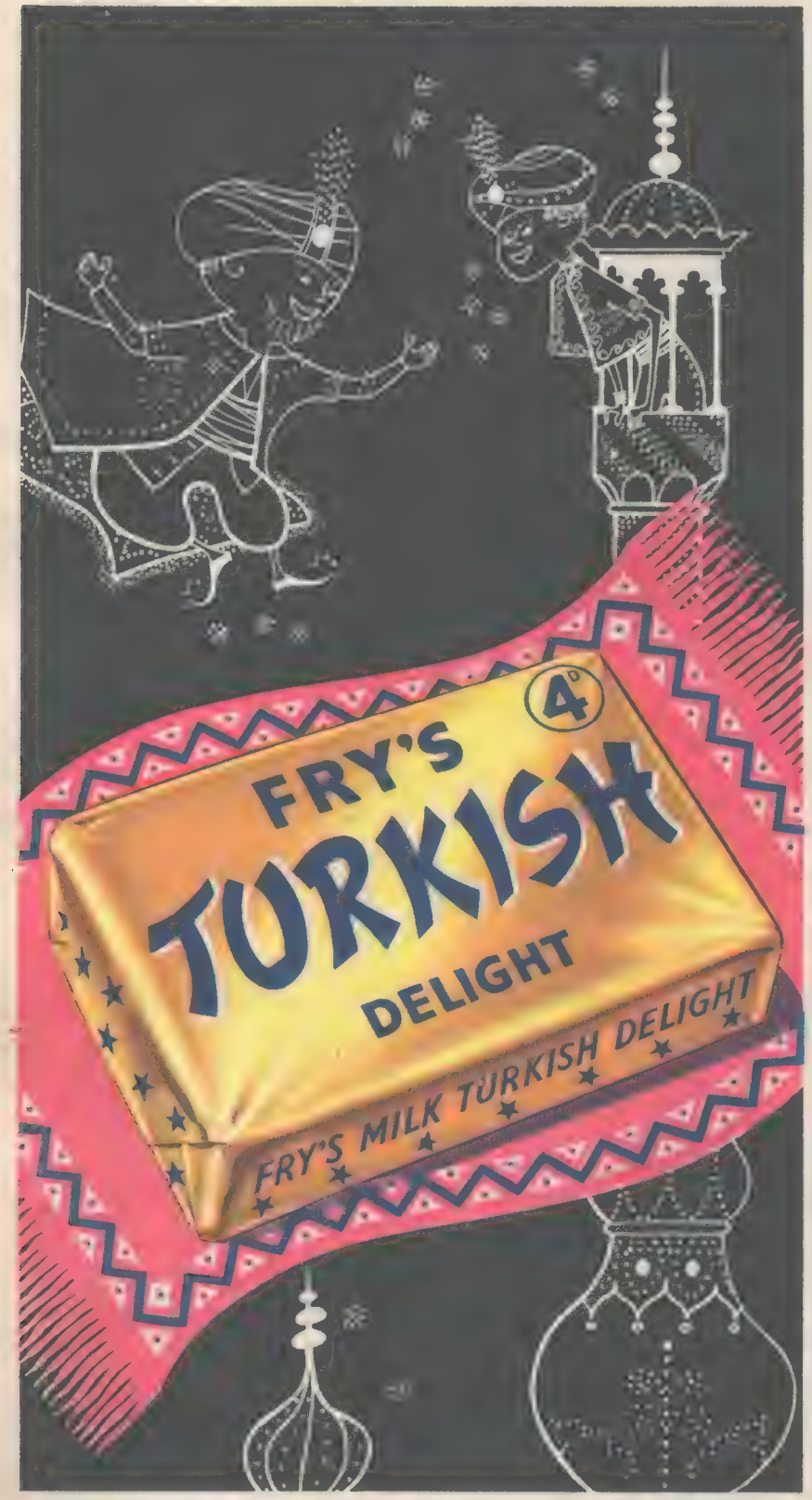

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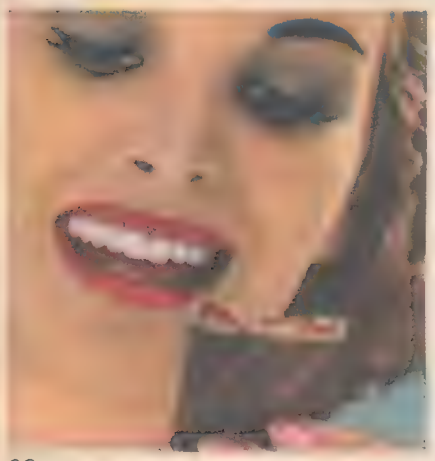

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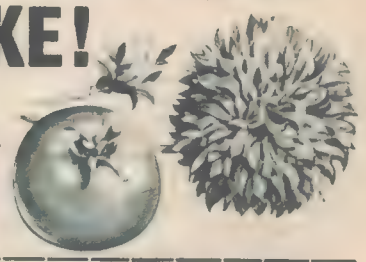

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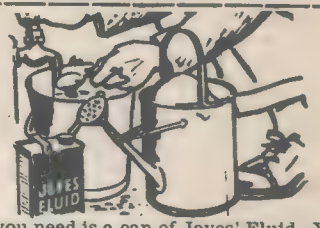

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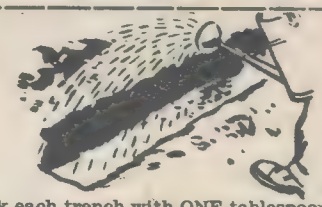

Soak each trench with ONE tablespoon of Jeyes' per gallon of water, and soak the top spit too as you throw it over. Use at least a gallon of solution per square yard.

At least 14 days before use or covering with glass, sterilize the soil for cloche work too. You'll find full details of these jobs and many others in "Jeyes' Fluid in the Garden".

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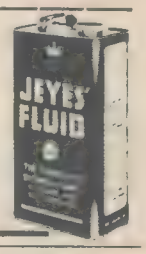

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he was allowed in the country?" I asked, thinking of what Spencer Millworth had told me.

"My dear, sir, there was never any question of Malin being allowed in the country or kept out of it. Malin's a British subject. Does that satisfy you?"

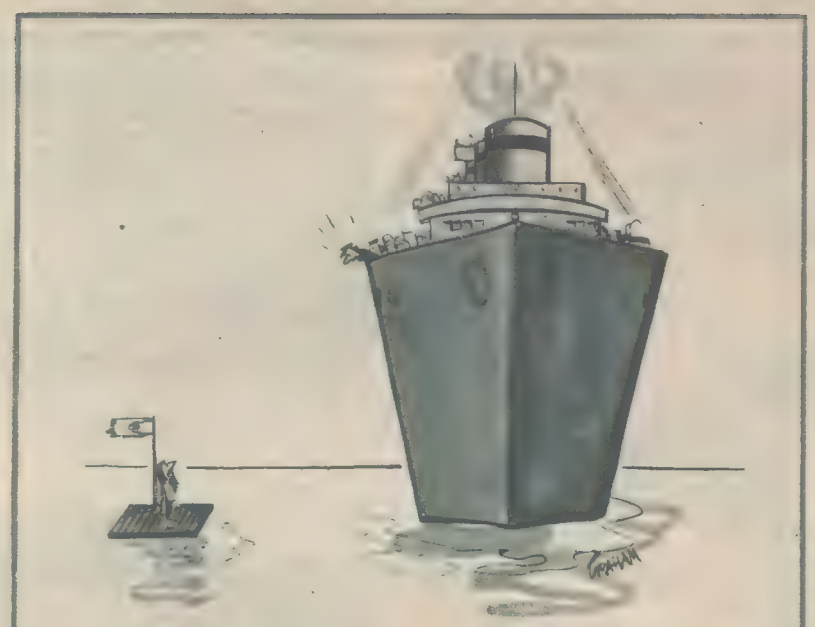
"No," I said bluntly.

"I'm sorry if it doesn't, sir." Watkins was smoother than ever. "But then, I'm under no obligation to satisfy you, am I? I've been interrupted in the course of my inquiries into Chalmers's death, which on the available evidence you may well have caused, to come here and investigate Ollett's death—which again, you may well have caused. It seems to me that the *bona fides* of Reardon and Malin are beside the point."

I should have known. As a solicitor I'd had sufficient dealings with the police to know that they traded only in facts.

"Very well," I said. "If you're adopting an obstructive attitude, I'll do the same. There are things I know and others I suspect, but I'll deal with them in my own way. I'm leaving now. My car's parked on the road and I'm taking Miss Peterson back to Melhaven. I'm willing to call at the police station tomorrow and make a statement, if you wish.

"Last of all, as Miss Peterson's legal adviser till she finds someone more competent, I forbid her to say any more about Ollett's death for the time being."



"Can we be of any assistance?"

I TOUCHED Elva's shoulder and she got up. The sergeant moved uncertainly to a point between us and the door, but Inspector Watkins shook his head.

"Let them go," he said. "They won't go far."

The Commander opened the door for us. To my surprise, he put his great hand on my arm and spoke in a low voice as I passed him. He said: "May see you later, Cradford."

Elva didn't speak till I was turning the car round. She was sitting beside me with her hands covering her face.

"So we're suspected of murder again—and this time it's poor Ollett."

"A natural suspicion," I said. "There's only our unsupported word that anyone besides ourselves was there with him at all."

It was a gloomy run back to Melhaven. I didn't even make a pretence this time of parking the car in front of the Dolphin. I took it straight to the quay, left it on the cobbles, and followed Elva down the ladder.

"Mark, I'm tired out," she said. "Not much sleep last night, and then all this today. I'd better get something for you to eat before I fall asleep."

"You'll lie back with your eyes closed while *I* get something to eat," I told her.

She didn't protest. I went into the galley and did the best I could with a bottle of milk, three eggs, butter and cheese. When it was spread on toast it looked eatable. I didn't risk coffee, but made tea and took it back to her.

"If they were going to use Flirtation——" she began.

"Well?"

"They can't use her now, can they, because the police have got her. But they won't sit down and *wait*. They may be making other plans to get Hurwood out of the country while we're sitting here doing nothing. They might send a boat in from Reardon's yacht."

"That's a risk we just have to take. We're both half asleep. We can't do anything tonight."

"I'm too tired even to wash up," Elva said when we'd finished.

"You'd better get some sleep. I'll get back to the Dolphin."

"You're not leaving here tonight," she said firmly. "You've learned things in the last twenty-four hours—or you should have done."

She got up wearily and went on deck. When she came back, giving me a wan smile, she said: "You're safe here. Watkins seems to have posted a guard. You don't have to worry about my reputation. It's gone already."

She was spreading cushions along the seat opposite the bunk. There wasn't a lot of space in between. I took off my shoes and lay back, feeling very self-conscious.

"You'd better have a couple of blankets. It turns cool in the small hours, Mark."

Tired as we were, sleep didn't come easily, and we talked for a while. Then for a long time I stared at the cabin roof, listening to the slap of water against the hull and the sound of Elva's slow, quiet breathing.

I heard Melhaven church clock strike midnight before I dozed off. . . .

Then it was suddenly daylight, and the dawn-wind was blowing coldly across the river. But that hadn't wakened me. Swallow was violently rocking and I could hear the roar of engines nearby. I pushed open the cabin door in sudden alarm. Elva asked in a drowsy voice what on earth was happening. She followed me on to the greyly lit deck.

"Look," I said, pointing.

The rocking had been caused by the wash of a boat that had passed within twenty yards of us.

"That's Chalmers's boat," Elva said. "Mark, it's Flirtation. But I thought the police had got her?"

We stood looking at each other while Flirtation disappeared round the bend of the river.

To be concluded next week

A billion daughters come to dinner

Continued from page 13

country. The third and last flight, in October, or earlier in a hard season, occurs when the aphids return to the trees where they lay their eggs.

Aphids might, with justice, be called "exclusive." There are 450 species in Britain, but few of them meet, except, of course, on their flights, when every Tom, Dick and Harry of an aphid gets mixed up. Even in a small garden, living close together, the species do not associate. The aphids on rose trees will never invade apple trees, and vice versa. This is because they are choosy about what they eat. There are rose aphids and bean aphids, hop, apple, turnip and other aphids, all keeping to their selected food.

It is the same when they go back to their winter trees. One species must have spruce trees and spruce trees only; another must have plum trees, another spindle trees or furze bushes, another poplars, and so on.

There is still a lot to learn, but we know now about the movements of many of the aphids that infest summer plants. To mention a few of the better-known species, the aphid from the spindle tree or furze bush goes to broad beans in May and becomes the dreaded "blackfly" of that vegetable. It also goes to sugar-beets, docks, poppies and the notorious weed called Fat Hen. The poplar aphid goes to thistles and the roots of lettuces. The hop aphid spends the winter and spring on plum or damson trees.

Three different aphid species are produced on the rose tree in spring. One stays on the rose permanently, another flies to grasses, wheat and oats, and the third goes to teasels. The apple tree may harbour four different species (in addition to the "Woolly Aphid" or "American Blight") in winter and spring, of which the Rosy Aphid is the commonest.

Some aphids are more selective than others in their choice of summer food, feeding on only one variety of plant. Other species feed on many different plants—though all those plants will be botanically related, even if distantly.

With aphids we enter a feminine world. Females breed for twenty generations without males being present, and breed much more rapidly that way. Parthenogenesis occurs with many insects, but virgin birth reaches its climax in the aphids, and so, too, does the rate of breeding. The most conservative calculation is that a single virgin aphid, given the food and absence of enemies, would, in a season of about six months, produce descendants numbering 68,080—followed by thirty noughts. Using weight as a comparison, Thomas Huxley estimated that the progeny of one greenfly would outweigh the entire human population of China.

And the season starts, remember, not with one aphid, but with millions.

What keeps them in check? Food, of course, limits them, but if food were the only controlling factor they would eat up all green things and then die off—and so would we. Spraying is so localized that it has next to no effect on the aphid population. It merely clears a few gardens and orchards.

In fact, in the long run, spraying, far from destroying aphids, actually benefits them, for it kills their natural enemies. Hop growers have begun to realize this, and a new spray has come into use. Its full name is *Bis(bisdimethylamine)phosphorous anhydride*, and it is marketed under the name Pestox III. It is harmless to the plant which absorbs it, but it makes the plant's sap poisonous to sucking insects.

I am not suggesting that spraying should suddenly be dropped, but it is a kind of vicious circle. The more one sprays the more one has to spray, for spraying causes the trees to lose their natural resistance to pests and diseases. Spraying should always be done in good time if the aphids are to be defeated. Once the leaves are curled it is too late—the spray will not get *them* but it will get their enemies, which have been attracted by the presence of large numbers of prey and are mustering for the kill.

Only their natural enemies keep aphids in check. These are mostly other insects, and there are many of them, but the chief exterminaters are ichneumon flies and ladybirds.

Ichneumons vary in size. Most are long and narrow-waisted and look rather like gnats as they hover over bushes and plants in the summer. They are not merely idling, however; every now and then one of them will descend and thrust its ovipositor into the belly of a greenfly, inserting an egg. The egg hatches into a small grub. The grub feeds on the tissues of the aphid, pupates, cuts a hole in the body of its now dead host, and emerges as a fully developed ichneumon.

A casual glance at a bunch of greenfly on a twig will show little of this but, using a pocket lens, it can be noted that several of them have a collapsed appearance and seem far from fit, while others have a neat hole drilled in their skin (the place of exit of a new ichneumon) and are, in fact, dead.

A GOOD example of the scale on which ichneumons operate is the fate of corn aphids, which attack wheat, oats and other cereals. They breed on the young shoots in large numbers and then move upwards in great armies to the growing heads of the cereal. And that, except for a very small ichneumon called *ephedrus plagiator*, would be the end of that field of corn. But this midge of a fly attacks the aphids at this vital period and kills off all but an insignificant remnant.

The method used by ladybirds is to feed directly on the aphid, eating the belly and leaving the rest. They have tremendous appetites. A single ladybird will eat thirty aphids in an hour, and its six-legged larva will do the same. Different species of ladybirds feed on different species of aphids, and often travel in large flocks. The hop ladybirds, for instance, go from one hop field to another, clearing off the aphids. At times the number of these ladybirds is enormous, and after flights they have been known to settle on beaches in the south so thickly as to alarm the inhabitants.

Aphids feed by puncturing leaves and young shoots and sucking the sap, which they take in continuously. The reason for this apparent gluttony is that plant sap is mostly water, and aphids have to take in large quantities to extract sufficient nutriment. Most of the sap is voided as a clear, sugary liquid, for sugar has been formed in the plant juice by the digestive processes of the aphid. Called honey-dew, the liquid is squirted on to the leaves around and is eagerly licked up by many insects, particularly ants.

Ants not only lick this honey-dew on the leaves, they also suck it direct from living aphids. Some species go farther, and keep and "milk" aphids.

Ants show much knowledge in their aphid-keeping and go to a lot of trouble. They know the type of vegetation required by the different species, and they keep aphids' eggs and put them out in spring on certain roots and stems. During cold weather they take aphids back to their nests and put them back when conditions improve. They bite off the wings of winged aphids to prevent them straying, and make mud enclosures for them. They also keep at bay the insect enemies of their own aphids—ichneumons, ladybirds and even wasps.

The foremost aphid-keeper in this country is a common ant, known as the Garden or Small Black (*acanthomyops nigra*). Its nests may be found in most gardens and fields.

I had an interesting experience once. I was examining greenfly on some young peach trees. Garden ants were running about on all the trees, but they did not interfere with me as I scraped aphids from three trees on to bits of paper. But when I began to scrape aphids from the fourth tree my hands were soon covered with stinging, biting ants. Undoubtedly the aphids on this tree had been specially planted out by the ants, and were regarded as their property. THE END

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Start taking Phillips Tonic Yeast today. You will sleep better, be less easily upset, less worried and depressed, and your digestion will improve. But be sure to ask for 'Phillips' Tonic Yeast. It is simply pure yeast with all its cells intact and without any drugs or harmful ingredients.

At all Chemists, 1/9, 4/- and 6/6.

The strangest show on earth

Continued from page 11

into his mouth, he leaves part of it burning on his tongue for added effect. It was after he had invited me to light my cigar from his flaming tongue that his grave-faced wife told me that every time he does the trick he runs the risk of permanent injury.

The principles of fire eating are quite simple. The tongue, lips and interior of the mouth must be kept well moistened with saliva, and, so long as the fire eater keeps breathing *out* and has sufficient sense to remove the fire before all the saliva has been dried up, little harm can result. The danger lies in the fact that much practice is required before the exact degree of moisture is known. And if the fire eater should accidentally breathe in, the lungs could be fatally scorched.

My interest in the more unusual aspects of show business goes back to my father's seaside pierrot pitch, which was the whole world of the theatrical profession in miniature. There I acquired the basic tricks of what was destined to be my trade.

By the time I was eight I could apply a passable five-and-nine make-up, gum on moustaches of crêpe hair, perform simple acrobatic tricks, spin a rope, and play all the cheeky small-boy parts in the knockabout comedy sketches which rounded off every show.

Aided by his sound business sense, my father built a prosperous business. That humble pierrot pitch laid the financial foundations of the chain of music halls, afterwards known as the Collins Circuit, which he acquired. He established a successful variety agency and a theatrical production company, and the name Fred Collins became a vital force in the entertainment world.

When I left school I acted for some time as my father's secretary, to learn the business.

ONE hot summer day in 1927, little Miss Mackintosh, the junior typist, burst violently into my father's room.

"Oh, Mr. Collins," she moaned, "a great big head just went past the washroom window."

And with this startling remark she fainted. I doused her copper head with the contents of a water carafe. Miss Mackintosh at once sat up, spluttering.

She said that she had gone to the washroom, and had seen a dark shadow crossing the tiny barred window high up in the opposite wall. This window gave on to the outer stairway and was at least eight feet above the ground, so it was small wonder that the sight of an outsize head, bobbing serenely past, had caused Miss Mackintosh to depart so abruptly.

"And," she concluded with a reminiscent shudder, "it was wearing a big top-hat."

At this juncture, a voice like the rumble of thunder among mountain-tops came from the outer hall. It was calling my father's name. "Fred! Fred! Where are you?"

Bending almost in half so that his head might not knock against the ceiling, the biggest human being I had ever seen stalked, beaming, into the room. It was Jan van Albert.

Miss Mackintosh gave one strangled yelp. . . .

My father was delighted that the Dutchman, whom he knew as a friend, was paying him a call.

"This," he said, when the three of us were alone, "is my son, Pete." A hand like a bolster closed over mine, enveloping it as if it had belonged to a day-old babe. And, for the first of many times, I strained my neck to gaze up at that handsome face towering nearly four feet above my own.

Mr. van Albert was dressed in formal morning clothes—his invariable attire, I learned, when in public—chosen to accentuate the exceptional height which was his source of livelihood. The purpose of his visit was to invite my father to his wedding, which was to take place in Dundee later that month. Dad was pleased to learn that "Lofty" was to marry Minna Fessler, also an old friend, and sister of the Swiss midget Seppetoni.

I was to come to know Lofty very well. He was born Albert Johan Kramer, in Amsterdam, on June 15, 1897. "Jan van Albert" and "Lofty" were stage names he acquired later.

Even at birth he showed signs of his big destiny, as he weighed seventeen and a half pounds. Apart from his over-generous proportions, there was nothing abnormal about the child. He was lively, intelligent and distinctly mischievous—in fact a typically healthy boy.

By the time he had reached the age of seven he was nearly six feet tall, and at twenty-one he was 9 ft. 3½ in. And at that height he has remained ever since.

He weighs thirty-two stone. His chest measures exactly fifty-two inches around; his waist forty-four inches. His hat size is ten and a quarter—though hatters tell me that heads of this dimension are by no means unknown. His hand measures twelve inches from the heel of his palm to the fingertips.

In the main, women are attracted to him. Minna gravely explains that being married to him has one unique advantage: her husband does not have to stand on a step-ladder to whitewash the ceiling.

For use in his own home, special furniture has been constructed to fit him. Formerly, when on tour, he used to experience the utmost difficulty in obtaining a good night's rest. Not wishing to inconvenience the hotel staff, he would sleep resignedly with his legs hanging over the edge of the bed and resting on the floor. When he married, however, his wife hit upon a simple plan which he now invariably adopts. When writing ahead to engage accommodation, it is stipulated that three double beds shall be provided for him. These are placed side by side, and Lofty sleeps crosswise in them, from corner to corner.

If being the Tallest Man in the World presents its problems, what must it be like to be the Tallest Woman?

For many years before I actually met her, I had known of the existence of a Miss Katja Van Dyk who, at the height of 8 ft. 4½ in., was generally acknowledged to be the reigning champion of giantesses.

In the spring of 1954 I met her by appointment in a café on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin.

I hurried into the café—and there she was, placidly sitting on two iron chairs, placed together, holding what looked like a doll's coffee cup in her hand. She acknowledged my greeting almost shyly, and I at once knew that, giantess though she may be, Miss Katja Van Dyk was every bit as feminine as Marilyn Monroe. Only there was a lot more of her. . . .

She was born in Holland but she would not disclose when.

"I have been thirty-five years old for ages now," she smiled, "and I'll stay thirty-five for the rest of my life."

Her clothes were smart, in quiet good taste. Her hands were shapely, and all her movements, in spite of her bulk, were astonishingly graceful.

"I studied ballet dancing as a little girl," she explained.

Her sister Charlotte also was a fine big woman, but at a mere seven feet eleven inches she had to look up to her "big sister." Katja and Charlotte had toured the music halls as a double act, billing themselves as: "THE VAN DROYSEN SISTERS, THE TWO BIGGEST WOMEN IN THE WORLD."

Judging from a picture postcard I have in my possession, this was no frivolous claim. It shows them, sumptuously gowned, wearing huge hats of upstanding ostrich feathers, posing statuesquely on either side of a normal woman. On the reverse side of the card is printed their "vital statistics."

ELSA (Katja): Height—8 ft. 4½ in. Arm-spread—8 ft. 6 in. Shoes—Size 16.

HILDA (Charlotte): Height—7 ft. 11 in. Bust—65½ in. Waist—58 in.

Katja obviously did not consider her own paltry bust and waist measurements—58 in. and 49 in., respectively—worthy of mention.

The two magnificent specimens of opulent womanhood toured with great success for some years. Then Charlotte became ill and was forced to retire from the act, leaving Katja to fill the stage alone. She has since appeared in practically every civilized country in the world.

I liked Katja from the first. She was obviously a woman of breeding and culture, whose topics of conversation were not restricted to the fairground and the stage. I enjoyed her charming company for nearly two hours and, when we parted, a signed contract for her to appear in *Would You Believe It!* was safely in my pocket.

Often, during her subsequent tour with the show, I saw her engaged on delicate pieces of needlework in her dressing-room. Once I commented upon her industry, and asked what she was making. Proudly she held up for my inspection the largest pair of silk panties in the world. They looked like two airport windsocks stitched together. An ordinary woman could have stood in each leg with room to spare. Pretty underwear, she confided, is her special weakness. Her taste inclined towards the frivolous and frilly, lavishly embellished with lace.

I CANNOT conclude my references to giants without narrating an astounding coincidence.

In August, 1948, I was returning from the United States in the Dutch motor ship Noordam. Two days out from Hoboken I was handed a radio message from my general manager which read: "LOFTY ILL UNABLE APPEAR WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT PLYMOUTH NEXT WEEK."

That was that. For some artists it might have been possible to find a suitable deputy. For Lofty, never. How the show would be received without its principal attraction I did not care to contemplate. But, two thousand miles away on the bosom of the Atlantic, there was obviously nothing to be done, so I tried to put the matter out of my mind.

The ship docked at Rotterdam at five o'clock on the Saturday morning prior to the Plymouth opening. It was a fine sunny day. No taxis had yet arrived outside the Customs sheds, and I decided that a walk into town to stretch my legs would be pleasant after having been cooped up on board ship for so many days. Giving instructions for my luggage to be delivered to the railway station, I set off down the long, cobbled road which led into Rotterdam.

I walked steadily for three-quarters of an hour with only my thoughts for company. Then I saw a figure approaching. As it drew nearer I could make out that it was a man wheeling a bicycle. Steadily he came on, and the closer he got the more distrustful of my eyes did I become.

When the man was within fifty yards there could no longer be any doubt.

He was quite the tallest creature, apart from Jan van Albert, that I had ever seen in my life.

I speak no Dutch, so I said to the man in German: "I am a showman. Would you care to go over to England with me today and appear in my revue next week?"

The big fellow understood. Yes, he said, he would like to very much. He turned his bicycle round, and together we walked into Rotterdam. . . .

The advertisements for *Would You Believe It!* at Plymouth the following week bore the announcement:

"I regret that JAN VAN ALBERT (LOFTY) is unable to appear, owing to illness. In his place I have the honour to present RIGARDUS RINJHOUT who, at exactly 9 feet 1½ inches, *is only 2 inches shorter*!"

Ambition is one of the commonest diseases afflicting mankind. Yet it affects no two people alike. I claim the distinction that for years I secretly trained my body and mind for the great day when I should present a Flea Circus on the music hall stage.

The road I had to travel was a long one, finishing on the stage of the Empire Theatre, Nottingham, on the evening of Monday, February 14, 1949.

The qualifications essential to the successful handling of fleas are not to be encountered every day. There are only three persons in the whole of the British Isles who, starting as it were

Your Garden and Mine

by PERCY THROWER

BY sinking a wooden tub in my garden I have found a way to grow such lovely plants as the dwarf water lily and iris laevigata. I tarred the tub for preservation before sinking it in the lawn with the edges level with the grass.

To give a pleasing finish, it is ringed with flat edging stones between which I have planted forget-me-nots and primulas.—A. L., Uttoxeter, Staffs.

A mulch made from old newspapers soaked in water for two days will help to keep weeds down. Stir the pulp before pouring it round the plants. It will dry into a mat, a quarter of an inch thick, which will choke the weeds. —MRS. M. WHETTER, Berrynarbor, N. Devon.

PERCY THROWER says: A miniature pool can look quite nice if you choose only small plants.

The water lily should first be placed in a wire basket containing a mixture of soil and manure, if available. Make certain that it rests on the bottom when you drop it into the water. The irises want only shallow water and can be put in wire baskets hung from the side. You must have an aerating plant such as elodea to keep the water sweet.

This newspaper mulch would be particularly useful in a town garden where lawn mowings and compost are scarce. Mulches help to retain the moisture and keep down weeds.

JOHN BULL pays five guineas each for the best original, topical gardening hints sent to Percy Thrower, JOHN BULL, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. No entry can be returned unless a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

MEN AND WOMEN—4

Women are never disarmed by compliments. Men always are.

Oscar Wilde

HORNBLOWER'S LONDON

by C. S. Forester

As a prelude to his great new story "Hornblower and St. Elizabeth of Hungary," Forester writes about the city of his boyhood . . . where a child could make exciting journeys into a dreamland

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

from scratch, could procure, harness and train a collection of these gifted insects.

The first requisite for the profession is a keen eye. It is no earthly use expecting Beppo, the Daring Young Flea on the Flying Trapeze, to execute the intricate ballet steps of Mademoiselle la Puce if he is picked up in the tweezers by mistake. A trainer must be able instantly to differentiate between the various members of the cast or they'll be given the wrong acts to do.

The second essential is a rock-steady hand. The harnessing of a flea is by far the most delicate and important part of the entire operation.

After the artist has been successfully harnessed — with fine gold wire—a long, gruelling period of training begins. Size, vigour and general standard of intelligence having been carefully taken into consideration, the aspirant is tried out on several pieces of equipment in order to determine his suitability for one or other of the various speciality acts in the show. A skilful foil-fencer, for example, rarely makes a good lifter of weights: his reactions are too delicately attuned. Your dashing charioteer, on the other hand, will often be hopelessly lost in the trick-cyclist's rôle. It is all a question of aptitude with fleas, exactly as it is with human beings.

And only "human" fleas, the aristocrats of this underrated species, are trainable at all. Dog fleas, for example, are far too dumb to waste time on.

There just aren't enough human fleas to go round in Britain.

CONDITIONS for their survival have been all but swept away. It appears that the lively little fellows have retreated *en masse* to certain small lodging-houses in the less-frequented seaport towns. There the stock is constantly being revitalized by the influx of foreign blood. Gay Spanish sailor fleas roll their dark eyes at our blonde English misses; and another generation of miniature jugglers and acrobats is born.

The lodging-house keepers catch them in special wicker-work traps, and it often takes four or five weeks to snare sufficient of them to put on a reasonable show.

Flea-circus owners pay fourpence each for small specimens, sixpence for large ones. When informed of this hitherto unexploited source of wealth, one lodging-house guest threw his battered headgear joyfully into the air and yelled: "Blimey, I'm a millionaire!"

I at last found a flea circus ideally suited to my purpose. It was owned by an intelligent English fairground showman and worked by a lady whose flow of humorous talk added greatly to its entertainment value.

To the showman I confided my lifelong ambition.

"A flea circus on the stage!" he cried. "But how on earth will the audience be able to *see* it?"

I explained. The showman nodded thoughtfully.

"I think you've got something," he conceded. "Anyway, it'll be good fun finding out if you have."

My idea was this: I had often seen a projector called an epidiascope. Having much the same appearance as a giant magic lantern, it efficiently performed two separate and entirely different functions.

The first was to show slides. The second, to project the exact image—in its own colours, of course—of any object placed on a ten-inch platform, in front of a powerful lens which protruded from the 1,000-watt lamp casing.

I bought one of these instruments. Among the technical problems which had to be overcome was the intense heat created by the 1,000-watt bulb. No lesser strength could throw a sufficiently powerful beam of light on to the rear-projection screen and provide the image, six feet in size, which was essential if the six-inch circus ring and its minute performers were to be seen from all parts of the theatre. But experiments showed that living matter, such as the human hand, could bear the heat for only thirty seconds at most.

To overcome this difficulty I arranged that humorous cartoon slides should be shown between the fleas' acts, thus directing the light and heat into the other compartment of the epidiascope and giving the platform chamber time to cool down.

This scheme worked perfectly.

When presenting the act, Lily, the clever trainer, sat on a high chair behind the epidiascope, her beautifully manicured hands fitting neatly into the platform chamber, one on either side of the little red circus ring. She lifted her tiny performers into their acting positions by their harness, using a pair of stamp-tweezers for the purpose. The delicate props were manipulated in the same way.

Lily's husband, Bill, stood ready to operate the projector half of the instrument and show the slides.

I rehearsed all the artists concerned, insect and human, for nearly a month and, when the opening night arrived, we were all eagerly looking forward to the exclamations of delighted astonishment that would reward our hard work.

The novelty was to be one of the featured items in the 1949 edition of *Would You Believe It!*—which had been planned as an entirely new show from beginning to end. . . .

The time for the flea act arrived. The compère, upon whom had been impressed the solemnity of the occasion, made his entrance in portentous fashion, raised his hand for silence, and said: "Ladies and gentlemen! Tonight you are present at the making of theatrical history. Mr. Pete Collins will show, for the first time anywhere in the world, a live flea circus on a full-sized theatre stage. This is not a hoax, but a genuine scientific achievement."

The compère left the stage and the lights were dimmed.

Then, welcomed by a loud fanfare from the orchestra, the first slide was shown on the screen.

The caption read:

PROFESSOR KEATING'S
Colossal
FLEA CIRCUS

For the first three minutes or so the show ran like clockwork.

First, there was an exciting chariot race between the Roman Gladiator, Ben Hur, and his deadly rival, Julius Fleasar. The tiny vehicles they pulled were fashioned in twenty-two carat gold by a jeweller who was a master of his craft. For let no one think that any old equipment is good enough for a flea: these exquisite little models cost £25 apiece.

The feat those insects then performed in hauling their chariots was the equivalent of a human being pulling a double-decker bus.

Ben Hur was the winner, and a comical slide depicting the defeated Fleasar's chagrin was shown to cool the lamp compartment down.

Next, Wun Long Hop, a Chinese artist of international repute, presented his juggling act. Lying on his back, he revolved a large wooden ball, many times bigger and heavier than himself, turning it over and over with his legs in exactly the same manner as you would see a human juggler perform the same trick. His Herculean dexterity was warmly acclaimed. The "wooden" ball, of course, was really made of pith; but this in no way detracted from the sensational nature of Wun Long Hop's achievement.

To the accompaniment of her usual introductory patter, Lily gently placed the next artist, a tight-rope walker, in the ring.

"And now we present Mademoiselle Blondini, a little lady who walks the tight-rope, balancing high in the air. You will notice that she has no safety net——"

At this point a deafening crash of glass, amplified to the magnitude of a thunder-clap by the loudspeakers, came from the stage. I prayed that it was only somebody who had fallen through the roof, but in my heart of hearts I knew better. Some clumsy person, of identity never to be revealed, had stumbled against the epidiascope in the blackout, smashing every single slide to smithereens.

True to the highest theatrical traditions, the show went on. But without the cooling slides.

Lily's voice came through instantly after the crash, calmly continuing her announcement. She afterwards told me that, in one split second, she had weighed the consequences and made what was, for her, the only possible decision.

"Mademoiselle Blondini is reputed to have landed in England with the Flea French Forces during the war. She appears to have had some training with the Commandos, for although she carries a parasol to maintain her balance, she prefers to walk on the underside of the rope instead of on top in the usual way. . . ."

Mademoiselle crawled safely across. There was no slide to cool the platform chamber down, so the next act had to be put on at once.

Lily's voice, level and unhurried, was heard as before: "Pedro and Pierre are now going to give you a display of the noble art of self-defence. Their tiny sword-blades are made of steel and are very sharp."

She placed the fencers in the ring upon the platform. Bill brought them into focus.

"But Pedro and Pierre are not going to kill each other. That would never do. This, ladies and gentlemen, is merely a friendly demonstration. Now, are you ready? On guard!"

The tinsel swords flashed in the brilliant glare.

"Note how the little duellers parry and thrust. If you watch very closely, you will see——"

Pss-st! Pss-st!

Two tiny puffs of blue smoke rose slowly into the air, marking the places that had once been occupied by Pedro and Pierre. Their tinsel swords crumpled in the heat.

There was a moment of stunned silence.

THEN Lily rallied bravely. The charred bodies of the unfortunate fencers were quickly lowered out of view, and the calm voice went on as if nothing untoward had happened:

"Now we introduce Madame Ivanitch, direct from the Russian Ballet, where she inspired many new steps. The costume she is wearing was designed by People's Artist Scratchitoff. . . ."

The little dancer, dressed in a gay tuft of red feather, came clearly into sight. She executed a spirited leap, followed by an entrechat. She was in good form.

"The dance Madame Ivanitch is going to present——"

Pss-st! Another pathetic little wisp of blue smoke curled upwards.

"Wa-a-a-h!"

It was the voice of Lily, bewailing her dead. But only for a second. Almost before her lapse into natural human grief could be noted, again the carefully controlled professional tones came through:

"Have you ever seen a flea riding a tricycle? Silas will show you how it is done. Of course, he can't sit on the seat and put his feet on the pedals like you or I, so he propels the machine by walking a treadmill, fixed on to a drum between the rear wheels."

Lily could stall no longer. Silas was slowly and reluctantly brought into view.

Pss-st!

"Presenting Samson, who will give you some idea of the tremendous strength a flea has in comparison to its size by drawing this——"

Pss-st!

And, one by one, that brave woman, wailing piteously at each bereavement, incinerated her entire troupe.

It was the noblest and most tragic performance I have ever seen on a theatre stage.

When at last it was all over, poor Lily had to be assisted to her dressing-room and given a restorative glass of brandy.

There were no more performances of The Colossal Flea Circus on a music hall stage.

NEXT WEEK: My search for a miracle-man

LEAVES FROM

Starke's

HOLIDAY GUIDE BOOK

"Two or three gentlemen will be able to journey more economically than a solitary traveller"

Best foot forward

Continued from page 19

felt and feel for these two men. Never, by word or facial expression, did they ever imply the slightest doubt that I would achieve my aim. . . .

Gradually I acquired confidence. At first I fell very often—I once counted more than a dozen times in a day—but the fact that I had formerly possessed the balance of an athlete and a horseman helped me considerably.

I learned that other things than heat could swell my stumps. I began to learn what I now know only too well, that my physical and mental condition is exquisitely tuned to the condition of my legs.

Above all, I learned that for people in my state the power of will, once acquired, cannot be left to operate alone, but must be continually renewed, just as the heart pumps oxygen to the blood with every breath.

All this and much more I learned between the middle of May and August, while the hospital took in and sent away the wounded and while London and the south-east, basking under the cloudless skies, settled down to watch and fight the Battle of Britain.

I had a letter from Douglas Bader which, in its candid refusal to underestimate my difficulties, became an added stimulus.

One day, towards the end of July, after a particularly discouraging session on my legs I lost my temper and hurled my single stick against the wall.

"Blast you!" I shouted hysterically, "I will *not* walk with a stick."

I was alone on an uneven path and was tired, having been at it for hours. The stick, rebounding from the wall, had vanished in a clump of bushes. Walk now I had to, whether I wished it or not. I started off gingerly, concentrating as I had never concentrated before or since in my life.

The intensity of my effort must have been total, for the next thing I recall is finding myself in front of the hospital's main entrance. I put one hand on the balustrade and looked back; the distance I had staggered was at least fifty yards. I was breathless. My stumps hurt badly and every muscle in my body was stretched, but my heart was beating with something more than fatigue.

With my first "solo" behind me I started to badger the doctors into giving me my release from Roehampton. I intended to talk myself back into the Fleet Air Arm in a ground job; graduate to flying in the navy and finally transfer to the R.A.F. My goal was the Spitfire—and nothing else.

I knew no friends in high places who could pull strings. One or two of the men I had met in Roehampton had humoured me banteringly: a reaction which was in some ways worse than discouragement. Except for myself nobody really believed in my dream.

Only Beal and Gear, with their psychological insight, had not been incredulous. But now I needed someone who would believe in me and speak for me. I needed a mentor. I found him in the person of Archie McIndoe, the consultant in plastic surgery. He had set up his famous clinic at East Grinstead, and I met him while convalescing near there.

It was a casual encounter; no more than a handshake and muttered names, but it was to have profound consequences on my life. Archie glanced at my face, touched the keloid over my left eye with one finger and with a "Let's fix up that eye for you sometime," moved on to another patient.

The operation was nothing: a local anaesthetic, some deft crochet-like manipulation, and the eye was free. While he worked he asked me about myself. Something in his manner, at once ironical and sympathetic, prompted me to tell him of my resolution to get back into the air.

"Quite a proposition with those pins," he said quizzically. "How well d'you walk on 'em?"

"Not too badly," I said. "It's coming gradually."

"Yes, I've seen you floundering around. Keep in touch. We'll see what we can do. . . ."

One evening in early October, Kathleen Dewar, wife of the whisky magnate, invited me to a cocktail party. She had taken a keen interest in my case, and was determined to help me as much as she could. At the party I was introduced to Charles Hughesden, the husband of Florence Desmond. Hughesden asked me if I thought a little flying would help, and offered to take me up with him in a light aircraft of which he had the use.

I asked nothing better, and a few days later I was driven to Hanworth. We got out of the car and, with my heart fluttering slightly, I followed Hughesden out to the field. There, near a hangar, was a trim little Cygnet Moth.

To my surprise, when we were in the air, I felt neither arrogance nor fear, but only a sort of wary satisfaction. After flying me round for some twenty minutes, Hughesden offered me the controls. I was too staid at first, then, correcting this, not staid enough; but I soon got the feel of the rudder bar through my tin legs and did one or two correct if unspectacular circuits.

"You can fly all right," said Hughesden when we got down. "Would it be any help if I wrote an unofficial certificate to that effect?"

I told him that I was sure it would. He gave it to me that night and for the rest of my time at East Grinstead I kept it in my pocket, thrusting it under the nose of Kathy and Archie and anyone else who seemed interested.

A few days after the Hanworth trip I had another opportunity to fly. John McPhail, of 603 Squadron, shot down and burned in the Battle of Britain, found himself at our convalescent home. Making, as usual, a dead set at anybody who had the slightest connection with the air, I told him my story and, of course, produced my famous certificate.

John was sympathetic and arranged for me to have a flight with 16 Squadron, at Gatwick, an Army Co-operation Unit.

I went up in a dual-control Moth Minor, and this time I felt much more confident and relaxed. I was immensely pleased with myself. My legs that day were in good condition, and the Moth flew obligingly. But my native caution told me that I must hurry slowly. A Cygnet and a Minor were first and satisfactory steps; the Spitfire was still a long way over the hill.

Near the end of October things began to happen quickly. I went up to the Admiralty, summoned by Sir Victor Warrender. The doctors checked me over; I filled in—never more hopefully—the usual and numerous forms. "The penny," Archie McIndoe told me one morning, "is about to drop."

It dropped a few days later when I was informed that I was to rejoin the Fleet Air Arm as acting sub-lieutenant, R.N.V.R., at St. Merryn, Cornwall. It wasn't flying, but at least it had to do with flying. St. Merryn was an armament training camp. Shark aircraft, towing drogues, droned round the sky pursued by Swordfish firing their single machine-gun from the rear turret.

My duty was to sit in the control tower and flash an Aldis lamp as the Skuas and Swordfish took off and landed. In this I was assisted by a Wren, generally pretty and always willing to talk. Such was my shyness during the first few weeks that the most these young girls ever got out of me was a grumpy "Good morning."

The Cornish winter, mild and grey, depressed me. My legs lost their fit and I fell more often, sometimes breaking them. The conviction that I was getting nowhere grew stronger; self-pity made its reappearance. Then Freddie Charlton and Bobby Kearsley arrived.

I hadn't seen Charlton and Kearsley since we were pupils together on the flying course at Gravesend. Both, in my eyes, were veterans, having already fought over Dunkirk and in Norway. Their uninhibited, rollicking company whittled away some of my shyness. Thanks to Charlton, I even summoned up the courage to kiss a girl for the first time since I had lost my legs.

It was at Newquay, where we had gone to a dance. When the festivities were ending Freddie sprung his trap. He told me that there was a girl waiting in the car.

"Waiting for what?" I asked.

"For you!" he said, and before I knew properly what was happening he had me outside and standing alone in the car park.

A girl, who must have been watching, slipped out of the back seat and put her arm round me. "Come on, old tin legs," she laughed, "no one's going to eat you." The fact that she knew and was not repulsed decided me. I climbed in awkwardly and she followed. Two arms embraced me, I felt a wing of hair touch my face.

The next morning I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten her name. It had been Mary, I believed, or Marina. It didn't matter, in any case. I felt nothing but gratitude for her. Another barrier, if it wasn't down, had lost some of its intimidation. . . .

At about this time I put in my first application to go back on flying. With unwonted promptitude, the reply to my application came back from the Admiralty: it was turned down flat.

The next few months at St. Merryn I recall as a period of increasing impatience and boredom punctuated by fright and trouble with my legs.

One Saturday night I took the Cornish Riviera to London for a few days' leave. Plymouth was being bombed and the line ahead of us was hit; the train stopped on a bridge spanning the River Plym.

Suddenly, the noise increased and the light from the flames lit the inside of the carriage with a brighter hue. From the confused growl above the city a noise detached itself. It grew louder; I recognized the double, off-beat throb of a twin-engined aircraft. One of the five civilians in the carriage shouted: "This is for us!" and a few seconds later I was left alone.

I was immobile; terrified. I glanced at the long drop down to the sleepers and saw the glint of the river far below. When it became only too evident that the bridge was being dive bombed I crawled under the seat.

When a bomb hit the bridge quite near me, rocking the train as if it were a pram, I had had enough. I dragged myself across the floor and somehow managed to lower myself to the track. There was not a soul in sight. The—by now—three bombers which hovered, dived, pulled up and hovered again might have been briefed expressly to attack me. Lying between two sleepers with my head in my arms, I realized how difficult it is to be brave alone, and without your full physical resources. . . .

One night the Germans attacked St. Eval in the early hours. It was a violent raid, more widespread than usual, and the bombs were soon falling merrily round St. Merryn.

A Royal Marine lieutenant who, as orderly officer, had been striding about getting people into the shelters suddenly shone his torch on me. "Out to the shelters!" he shouted.

I pleaded my legs, or lack of them.

"Out to the shelters!"

There was nothing for it but to comply. I groped for the legs, heaved myself to a chair and put them on. I tried to stand and fell flat on my face. I tried again and fell once more. I began to panic. I shouted a shout

MY BROTHER Chris

At his prep school Chris was nicknamed Boo Boo after one of the famous chimpanzees at London Zoo. He was a small, serious little boy, and we often teased him about his supposed resemblance to his namesake, but he always took it in good part.

Our father worked for a time in New Guinea and then in Jerusalem, so that we spent our early years in very hot climates. Father had a theory that we should get as much exercise as possible before the day became really hot, and insisted that we all run round the house seven times before breakfast each morning. I was most impressed with Chris's performance, for he always disappeared into the house as the rest of us were only completing our fourth or fifth circuit.

One day, I found out how he did it. As we passed the front door each time we called out the number of circuits we had completed. Chris, apparently, could not count. On his first time round, he shouted out boldly "one." The second time, he looked furtively over his shoulder and called out "four," and when he reached the front door for the third time, he shouted out a jubilant "seven" and rushed straight in.

When he was six, he was challenged by an older friend to race to the brick wall at the bottom of the garden. I was asked to umpire. My small brother was so determined to win that he did not dare reduce speed at the finish. He went smack into the brick wall and had to go to hospital to have three stitches put in his forehead.

Although he was not a nervous boy, Chris developed a very bad stutter and by the time we returned to England, just before the outbreak of the last war, his speech was often hard to understand. He himself was quite unconscious of this but as a result he was never cast for a part in any of the school plays but was always given some unobtrusive job behind the scenes.

The headmaster was worried about the psychological effect this might have, and wrote a special item in one play in which Chris had to dress up as a black boy and do some sort of comic turn. Chris was thrilled. He smothered his face in soot and walked on to the stage. Try as he might, he was unable to say one word, but he was so happy just to be standing before an audience that he grinned from ear to ear.

The audience thought it all part of the act and roared with laughter. Chris got the biggest cheer of the evening.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS BROTHER? See page 38

without meaning, stertorous, a great cry of protest.

Heavy steps pounded towards me. The torch flashed in my face. It was the marine.

"Out to the shelters!"

"But I can't move!"

The light dropped from my face to my legs; they were horribly yellow under the kilt of my nightshirt. I looked down and we both burst out laughing. We laughed and laughed for a full half minute, while the bombs whistled down and the flak's percussion shook the windows.

My legs were back to front. . . .

One morning, after watching a squadron of Spitfires take off on a sweep, I made another application to return to flying.

A month later, not having heard anything official, I wrote direct to Sir Victor Warrender. I mentioned his previous kindness to me; I mentioned McIndoe and Kathy Dewar; I reiterated my overriding desire to fly. It was the sort of begging letter which men in power must find intensely irritating.

In a matter of days I had a word back asking me to go up and see him. I took two days' leave, went to London and put on my now familiar self-selling act. Three weeks afterwards, I was asked to take a flying test at Lee-on-Solent.

The test was in a Tiger Moth; my instructor was a dark, serious-looking commander called Goodyear. He made no comment when he met me; I might have been a normal pupil so far as he was concerned, but I thought he looked away as I scrambled, all legs and elbows, into the cockpit. We took off and climbed; I stared at the dial quadrant, trying to forget the last time I had seen it. Goodyear did a circuit, landed and told me to take over.

I taxied away badly and swung considerably on take-off, but once in the air, concentrating fiercely, I flew for twenty minutes without disgracing myself. The second trip was an improvement, the last rather worse. I was sweating when I climbed out, sure that I had failed. Goodyear, peeling off his gloves, looked thoughtful.

I took my courage by the scruff of the neck. "How did I get on, sir?"

"Might have been better," he said. Then he added, after an eternity: "Might have been worse."

On that non-committal verdict I endured three weeks of anxious inactivity at St. Merryn.

Then, on October 15, the signal came through: ACCEPTED FOR FLYING DUTIES. JOIN ROYAL NAVAL AIR STATION AT LEE-ON-SOLENT IN EARLY DECEMBER.

I stumped round the camp hugging myself. I had made it.

A few weeks later I took a week's leave and went to see my mother.

Mollie, who could have engineered herself a comfortable post in the Women's Voluntary Service or the Red Cross, had instead joined the W.R.N.S. in a non-commissioned rank, and was a qualified driver. She had been at my back for so long since my crash at Gravesend that it was no surprise to me to learn that she was stationed at the Fleet Air Arm Fighter School at Yeovilton, although her quarters were at Ilchester. It was there that I went to see her.

I was absorbed by one all-important problem: should I tell her that I was going back to flying? In all honour I was bound to. It would shock her badly and I told myself, hypocritically, that she had already had shocks enough. What, in fact, I feared was that she might dissuade me.

In the end, inevitably, I said nothing. If I failed the course at Lee, no harm would be done. When I was really accepted as a pilot would be the time to tell her. When she did find out it was in the one way which could cause her the most distress—from a newspaper story. She was shocked and dismayed that I had not told her. And I felt miserable, all sorts of a swine. . . .

At Lee-on-Solent I went solo after four and a quarter hours. This time there was no trouble: I approached Tiger Moth No. DE197 like an ex-alcoholic taking his first whisky after a successful cure. That was on February 2, 1942. When the course came to an end I had 110 hours in my log book, my wings and a notable increase in confidence.

My success—for to me this was success — was largely due to my instructors. These were Lieutenant Commander Payen and Denis "Dotty" Dammers. Dotty was a thick, dark-haired man, an excellent instructor. But what interested me most was the fact that he had one artificial leg, the result of being shot down in a Swordfish during the Norway campaign.

Not only was he my instructor but we shared the same cabin. Stories went round that newcomers arriving late at night, and sometimes officers who had taken too much to drink, were more than startled to see three tin legs ranged for shoe cleaning outside our door.

In the middle of April, after being passed out, I was posted to 781 Communications Squadron, also at Lee-on-Solent.

The R.A.F. and a Spitfire were more than ever my objective; the logical next step in the scheme was to beg, borrow or steal my way on to a fighter course. The moment had come for long-suffering Sir Victor Warrender to toe the line once more.

I wrote to him again, and on May 2 I was posted to No. 9 Advanced Flying Unit at Hullavington, where they flew the Miles Master, an advanced single-engine trainer, and the Hurricane. It was not a fighter course, but it was an R.A.F. station.

Before the course came to an end, on July 15, I had done fifty hours' flying at Hullavington—much of it in Hurricanes—and was not displeased with my progress; an "average" assessment was what I had set out to obtain, and now expected.

To my astonishment and delight I was judged to be "above the average." This was more than an assessment: it was a passport. On this authority I applied for transfer to the R.A.F.

After all, I pointed out, I would never be able to go to sea. I couldn't mount ladders or stay upright on a heaving deck.

At the beginning of September I was posted to the R.A.F. as a pilot officer, with seniority backdated to January 1 of the same year. On September 19, at No. 52 Operational Training Unit at Aston Down, I climbed into a Spitfire for the first time. To say it was the high moment in my life so far would be feeble; it was *the* moment, and I was horribly afraid of anti-climax. There was none. I flew it round for exactly an hour and never had a second's anxiety.

I had sold my car and now, to celebrate my transfer, bought another: a small Ford Ten. Owing to my "disability" I was allowed extra petrol coupons, which were very useful for getting up to London, where I spent more and more of my spare time.

Pilots training at Aston Down varied in experience. Some were comparative veterans who were either doing a "refresher" course, or were converting to Spitfires after having flown some other type. Because I had already done a fighter course I came into the last category. I was assigned to "A" Flight and immediately made friends with four very original characters.

Two were Australian sheep farmers, or rather sheep handlers; "Shep" Shepherd and "Jerk" Conlon. To Shep and Jerk, typical long-jawed, sardonic-aggressive Aussies, England, and especially London, was the land of Cockaigne. My third friend was a very knowing citizen of the Bronx called Andy.

Andy's origins were obscure and I never found out what prompted him to leave the banks of the Hudson to risk his life in a Spitfire. He was small and dark; his repartee made a cockney seem a half-wit and he was permanently armed with a loaded .45 Colt.

Completing the team was Ned, a tall, bland ex-London policeman. He had a knowledge of the law and a placid tact did invaluable service to us all.

It was at Aston Down that I had my first swing on tin legs at a golf ball. Nothing could have seemed farther from the war than the suave fairways of Minchinghampton Golf Club. Clumping after the ball—when I hit it, which on the whole was surprisingly often—down the wide lanes of russet-coloured trees, I found it difficult to believe that, if all went well, I would soon (in the air force slang of the period) be "jousting with the Kraut."

Yet it was obvious both from gossip at Aston Down and a reading of the papers that no one would have to wait very long to see action once the course was over. German bombers, with their escorts, droned unceasingly over the Channel.

Unlike my companions on the course, I knew that any action I saw would be over Britain or Western Europe because my stumps, with their tendency to swell and chafe the sweaty skin in hot weather, precluded a posting to Egypt or the East.

Flying from Britain meant flying over water, an idea which I found strangely unpleasant. I asked myself what would happen if I had to "ditch" or descend in the Channel at the end of a parachute. The legs, obviously, would fill with water and sink me like a stone. But what if I took advantage of their cavities and filled them with an object or objects giving buoyancy? Say an inflated rubber balloon or ping-pong balls? That was the ticket! Ping-pong balls. I made a note to buy several dozen. . . .

I left Aston Down on December 7 after three months' intensive flying in Spitfires. After seven days spent with Mollie at Ilchester, I joined 131 Squadron at West Hampnett, a satellite airfield to Tangmere.

I went by car and drove more slowly than usual, dreading the moment of arrival. The men I had to meet, live and fly with now had been in the battle; some had done two or three tours of operations, some were famous names. How would they react?

I remembered miserably the depressing question a defeatist doctor put to me at Roehampton. "Think of the others," he had said. "Think of the pilot who knows that the Number Two in his section has tin legs. Would you like it?"

True, there had been Bader, but Bader had proved himself, and it was very natural to believe that this thing couldn't happen twice.

Somewhere at a deserted spot on the road I stopped the car and got out. I went a little way from it, turned round and walked back, rehearsing my entry into the mess. By the radiator I came to attention and held out my hand: "Pilot Officer Hodgkinson, sir!" I meant it to be self-confident and unmoved, but the windscreen reflected an awkward lout. Blushing furiously, I climbed in and started up.

It was dark when I arrived, and to my relief there seemed to be nobody about. In the hall I found a mess orderly who took my kit up to my room. Dinner, he said, was at 7.30 and would be taken, like all other meals, in a communal site about half a mile away. Meanwhile, I could get a drink in the anteroom downstairs.

I sat on the bed for twenty minutes, listening to doors banging, voices, cars driving up outside. Then, in a sudden panic that I might be late, I hastily brushed my hair, smoothed my tunic and hurried down. Someone was at the notice board. He turned and looked at me casually: a spare, dark-eyed man with the two and a half rings of a squadron leader on his sleeve.

"You must be Hodgkinson." He held out his hand. "I'm Fifield, in charge of One-three-one. Come in and meet the boys."

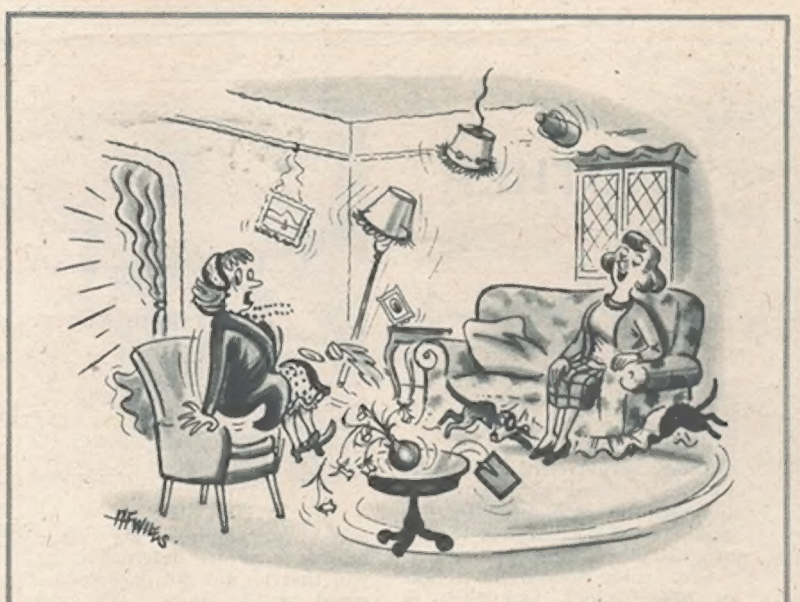
He waved me on. Holding myself unnaturally straight, I stumped into the next room. There were about a dozen officers present; I was led over to a group by the fire. Fifield introduced me; I caught a few names—Small, Sampson, de Bordas. I felt horribly tense. All these men, so politely casual and self-possessed, must know my history; and their eyes, I was sure of it, were fixed unwavering on my legs. It suddenly seemed to be impossible that I could ever get to know them, or fly with them, or have their trust. I drank my beer in gulps, listening to my stilted, unnatural voice answering their questions too eagerly.

Then, as a new group of pilots joined us, a single word shattered all my doubts. "Chaps," said Fifield, "this is the latest entry, Colin Hodgkinson. Come on 'Hoppy,' drink it up and have the other half. . . ."

"Hoppy"!

He had given me a label, a personality. I wasn't a freak and a stranger. I was accepted and identified as one of the squadron. I relaxed like a wire untightening. I could have shouted my relief aloud. For "Hoppy," from that moment, I became.

NEXT WEEK: I break my duck in battle over the Channel



"I can always tell when Henry has had a trying day"

MY BROTHER CHRIS

See page 37

Christopher Brasher, the Olympic gold medallist, is Mrs. R. F. Jones's brother

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EVER banked a £500 cheque? Ever seen your home and your district from a plane? For a few minutes' fun with words in Bullets this week, *both* thrills can be yours!

If you are new to Bullets, start by enjoying the latest winners: you will soon get the idea and be ready to make one for yourself. All you do is to choose as your starting-point any Example from the list on right. Then add to it any TWO, THREE or FOUR WORDS to make the whole into a Bullet for your £500 coupon below.

CHIEF WINNERS — "BULLETS" No. 2,085

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Jersey Holiday for Two: S. J. Kingzett, 778 Shirley Road, Hall Green, Birmingham:

Example: **In The Final Assessment**
Bullet: ***Allowances* Depend Upon *Code*!**

£25: W. J. Rice, 16 Warren Road, Filton, Bristol: TALE OF WORTHWHILE—"ADVENTURE"—EVERY *Full* ORDER-BOOK!

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For ten winners of £2 10s. see "Bullets" Bulletin. 30 Prizes of £1 and 1,500 new 2-in-1 Awards have also been posted.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any "EXAMPLE"

This Topsyturvy World	In Their Cosy Nest
Hunting For A Market	One Fine Day
Angry Young Man	At The Nudist Camp
The Mess We're In	They Call It Music, But
Made In Russia	Like A Bird
Outrageous	Bit Of A Has-been
Gloom And Despondency	With A Princely Air
In The Wilds Of Suburbia	An Unending Stream
Fighting Mad	In Imagination's Space-ship
Budding Scientist	Dad's Bought A Pub, So

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as usual

Faith, Hope And.....	.....At Harwell
Hurt	Those Pigheaded .....
Not.....Yet	.....In Distress

EXAMPLE .....

BULLET

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

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I agree to rules and enclose P.O. entry-fee at the rate of 6d. per Bullet.

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RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated June 15), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, June 1, for early news of No. 2,090 result.)

POST ENTRY
Bullets 2,090, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

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